

BUNJI GARLIN CLAUDE VONSTROKE BOYS NOIZE STRICTLY KEV GRUFF RHYS COMMIX

# MIX

113  
DECEMBER  
2007

ACCELERATING M



SWITCH TOPS OUR LIST OF THE YEAR'S BEST MUSIC, ART, AND CULTURE

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ANALYSIS <SNUG>  
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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
HAPPY HOLIDAY  
GIFT-BOT-2007  
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A BEAUTIFUL DEATH  
IN STORES NOVEMBER 14

# ASSASSIN'S CREED

ASSASSINSCREED.COM



PLAYSTATION 3



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# ISSUE 113

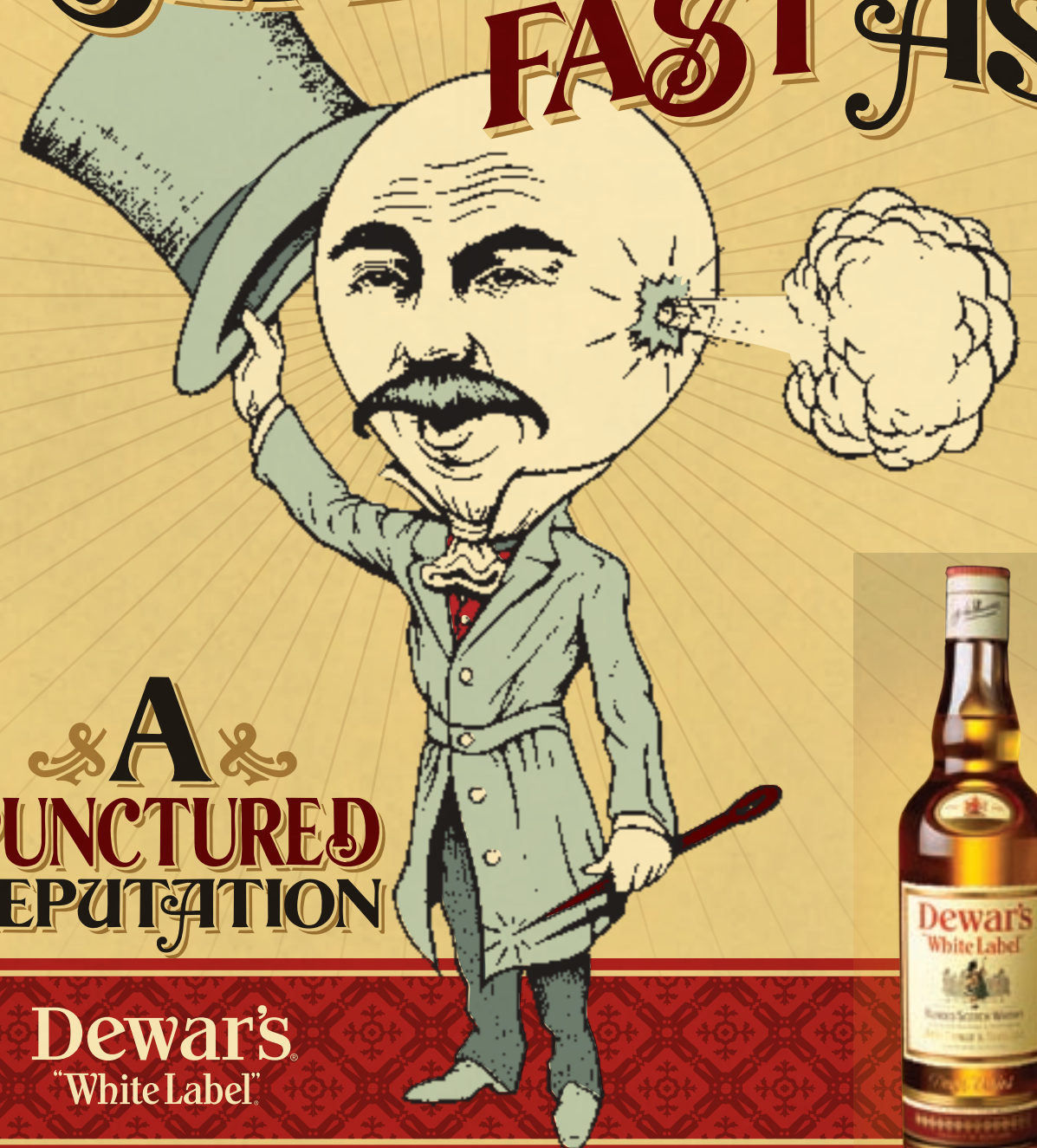
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Photo of Mary by Dirt

TOMMY DEWAR SAYS...

# NOTHING DEFLATES SO FAST AS



## A PUNCTURED REPUTATION

### Dewar's "White Label"

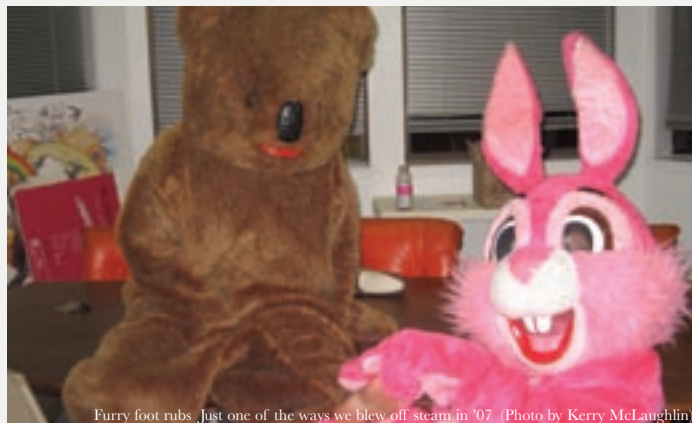


dewarism.com



DEWAR'S OLD FASHIONED: In the bottom of a rock glass, carefully muddle 1 teaspoon sugar, 2 dashes Angostura bitters, 1 orange slice, 1 maraschino cherry and a splash of soda or water. Take out the orange rind. Pour in DEWAR'S WHITE LABEL and ice. Garnish with 1 orange slice and 1 maraschino cherry. Enjoy the distinguished flavors of this classic cocktail.

## ED'S RANT OH SEVEN!



Furry foot rubs. Just one of the ways we blew off steam in '07. (Photo by Kerry McLaughlin)

A year ago this month we put Justice on our cover, not having any idea how prescient that move would turn out to be. As we roll around to our Best of 2007 issue, the French duo is now storming huge venues around the world with an arena-rock-style live show that references Metallica, Daft Punk, and Michael Jackson. Somewhere in between their distorted disco and smash-and-grab DJ sets, they've managed to charm trendy teenagers *and* jaded music heads (who you'll find bowing to the cross in this year's Best of 2007 poll).

Although we could happily never hear "We Are Your Friends" again, we thank Justice for spreading the mantra of "D.A.N.C.E." to the rock kids and showing mainstream hip-hop just how outmoded it is. We'll leave the Ed Banger stable to freshen up Kanye while we introduce this year's star: Dave "Switch" Taylor.

In this day and age, it's incumbent upon producers to spin gold from artists' shit... or at least refocus it. Nelly Furtado and J.T. would be lost without Timbaland's Midas touch. Klaxons and Arctic Monkeys owe a serious debt to Simian Mobile Disco's James Ford. And The Foals, Dragons of Zynth, and, yes, Scarlett Johansson are banking on TV on the Radio's studio grump David Sitck.

So while you may not have heard of Taylor, you've most certainly *heard* him. You liked the clever, concise way *Kala* stitched together M.I.A.'s provocative chants with world beats and bass? Thank Switch. The loopy-electro-bass-meets-post-punk of the early Santogold demos? Switch again. And what's that crazy cut-up stuff they're playing in the clubs—those stuttered vocals, clown-car synths, and surprise breakdowns making house fun to listen to again? Guess who.

But Switch and his posse ain't the only ones revitalizing house music. In this issue, we also catch up with Bay Area dirtybird Claude VonStroke, a man who's throwing the humor and fun back into 4/4, one monkey sample at a time. (Speaking of fun, check out Matt Furie's crazy monster mash in Vis-Ed, and New Orleans bounce music, which Jesse Serwer reports on in our What Is It? feature.)

Elsewhere, Trinidadian Bunji Garlin waves the flag for soca music, U.K. D&B dudes Commix get bassy in the studio, and Gruff Rhys and Strictly Kev get psyched on the ins and outs of collecting and reissuing. There's also L.A. punk from Mika Miko and German thump from Boys Noize. And, for the sixth time, a panel of our pals and pundits weighs in on the best, worst, and wildest moments of the year. They always remember more than we do, from the brilliance of Panda Bear's solo record to the horror of AutoTuning and Akon.

We hope you enjoy our salute to the big, colorful year that was '07, and if you missed any of it, don't forget to check out XLR8R.com for magazine archives, plus all the podcasts, videos, and downloads you could ever need.

And now if you'll excuse us, we're going to put our Puritan costumes back on and get back to work.

- Vivian Host, Editor

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### ON THE COVER

XLR8R Artist of the Year Switch by Rinzen

# THIS IS WHERE AIR BEATS CONCRETE.



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### BRETTE HOWARD

Stylist Brette Howard was born in a La-Z-Boy recliner in Bozeman, MT, during a blizzard, to musical parents (Ma on piano; Pa on bass). As a direct result, she has sung with members of Big Star, The Posies, and Yes. Brette developed her visual eye through vintage clothing shops in Seattle, photography in Los Angeles, and cultural fashion in San Francisco, where she now resides. In her own words, Brette is “on a neverending journey toward growth.” She styled this month’s Best of 2007 fashion feature.



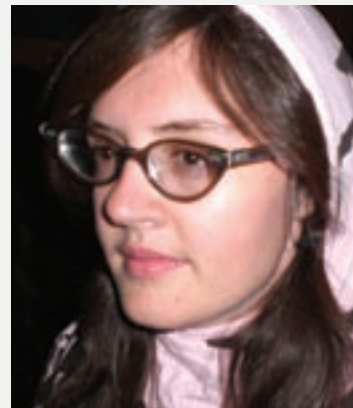
### RINZEN

Australian design and art collective RINZEN’s work covers a wide range of styles and techniques, and often features utopian alternate realities, geometric designs, and intricate, hand-drawn studies. Their posters and album covers have been exhibited at the Louvre and their large-scale artwork at Tokyo’s Zero Gate and Copenhagen’s Hotel Fox galleries. The group, whose members are based in Berlin, Brisbane, Melbourne and New York, designed this issue’s cover. [www.rinzen.com](http://www.rinzen.com)



### DAVID HEMINGWAY

Having previously written for the likes of *Melody Maker*, *Ammo City*, and *Sleazation*, Oxfordshire, U.K.-based David Hemingway now contributes to *Record Collector*, *DJ*, and *XLR8R* magazines alongside working in mental health. Hemingway has two pictures on his wall—monochromatic screen prints of Múm’s “Summer Make Good” and Stanley Donwood’s “Cnut”—beneath which he spends time listening to techno from the likes of Lawrence, Efdemin, and Pantha du Prince. This month he wrote about Lawrence’s subdued cover art.



### KELSEY GUNTARP

Since 2006, West Coast Ad Sales Rep Kelsey Guntharp has contributed immensely to *XLR8R*’s success. With this issue, Kelsey bids us farewell to further explore the West Coast’s redwoods and beaches, and the nooks and crannies of your mind. You can also catch her singing and playing bass in the heavy, ’70s-influenced band Tarrakian. [www.myspace.com/surmannuuhun](http://www.myspace.com/surmannuuhun)

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Episode 29  
Simian Mobile Disco  
Goes Gear

Episode 21  
Crate Digging  
with Devin the Dude



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Got something to say? Love us? Hate us? Write us at [letterbox@xlr8r.com](mailto:letterbox@xlr8r.com) or send mail to XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight Street #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.



October Issue #111



November Issue #112

### Cover Ups

[With regards to the Fafi-illustrated cover of the Paris issue, October #111] Love it. I've loved that artist for years. Very unique and different. XLR8R's cover beats the shit out of URB's with f'ing Perez Hilton on the cover... trash!

Jenn Nuccio, via the web

Le issue de Paris c'est tres, tres incredible! My French stops there, but obviously yours doesn't, cuz this issue is the best I've seen of any on the shelf. XLR8R roxxxxxx!

David M, via the web

Hey XLR8R

The French issue was amazing. The only thing missing from it is Yelle! "A Cause des Garçons" is more than just pop drivel and I hope you guys recognize that and still feature her in an upcoming mag.

Thanks for listening,

Gerald Penzer, via the web

### TV Dinner

I've got a wicked idea for you, if you produce the TV show. [We assume this is regarding XLR8R TV-Ed.] Why not bring the artists you want to interview out to dinner? This would be awesome to see what Derrick May eats. Does he like sushi? Or maybe a rapper at a fine-dining establishment. Why not?

Bill, via the web

### Never Mind the Bollocks

[XLR8R]...Is the bollocks!! After several years of Jockey Slut having been bought out by a large conglomerate, going to the shit, and then going bust, I was looking for a music magazine of equal quality.

I can only say you've exceeded yourself in finally fulfilling my desires. The subjects of your articles are not only diverse but remain underground and pretty cutting edge to provide an excellent education for electronic music lovers like myself. Being a U.K. resident, it also offers an insight into the scene in the U.S., but I was surprised at how insightful you are when it comes to the European scene as well. On top of the music, the design of the magazine [is] better by a long way than any other music magazine I've ever seen. I've been importing the magazine from the U.S. for about a year now and am wholly satisfied. Jockey Slut can fuck off! If only I had access to your [INCITE] CDs. Would love to give them a listen. eBay it is I suppose!

Keep up the good work.

Cain, via our MySpace page

**Corrections:** In November #112's Basic Needs column, the Square Records label was misidentified as "Square Roots" As well, Ital Tek is from Brighton, not Bristol, UK In October #111's French hip-hop piece, the name of rapper Diam was misspelled

# BJ "BITTER" BASTARD'S WHO GOT BEEF?

The music industry is a cutthroat world, and the vitriol spewed from the likes of Britney and Kanye even tends to trickle down to the tiniest corners of the indie rock and dance scenes. In the spirit of our year-end Top-Whatever lists, we had BJ "Bitter" Bastard recount his five fave beefs from our little corner of the music world.



### ROUND ONE: MATTHEW DEAR VS. FEDDE LE GRAND

Turns out that it's not just Detroit techno's African-American contingent that's had its sound co-opted over the years. Matthew Dear, who produced "Hands Up For Detroit" back in '99, got ripped off by Dutch douchebag DJ Fedde Le Grand, and this year he's suing Le Grand's label for some money from the best-selling Euro-house single that stole his sample. Le Grand told DJ Mag: "I came up with the idea for 'Put Your Hands Up For Detroit' about four years ago, but after producing seven different versions I almost gave up! Then the idea for the bassline popped into my head." Go remake "Boten Anna," dick wipe!

### ROUND TWO: SCOTTIE B. (AND B-MORE) VS. AARON LCRATE

It's apparently not enough that everyone from Diplo to New York hates on the dude; according to a message

board (a beacon of trustworthy info, I know), LaCrate even went as far as submitting a Scottie B. remix of Justice's "We Are Your Friends" as his own to a SXSW promoter. In Diplo's words: "Aaron is the worst dude ever."

### ROUND THREE: THE BLOW'S KHAELA MARICICH VS. THE BLOW'S JONA BECHTOLT (A.K.A. YACHT)

I have no idea if there was actually beef between these two at the time of The Blow's terribly sad, heart-stoppingly shocking, untimely break-up, but I'm putting my money on the chick to knock that fakely happy pencil-neck back to 1983.

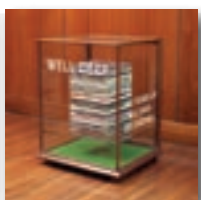
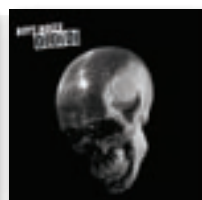
### ROUND FOUR: CLOCKCLEANER VS. THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

You gotta hand it to a guy (Clockcleaner singer/guitarist John Sharkey) who is willing to get banned from just about every venue in Philly, piss all over Bad Wizard's merch table, tell Man Man on record that

they "suck horse dick," call Dr. Dog "fine, if you're a parent and want to bring your infant to the show with you," and refer to the city's music scene as "mediocre and privileged," "humorless," and "full of thin-skinned crybabies"—and not leave town.

### ROUND FIVE: MAVADO VS. AIDONIA

Kinda sad that after all the back-and-forth diss tracks, the hefty death threats, the accusations of batty-this and chichi-that, all Aidonia really wanted was for Mavado to change the spelling of his name so as to not offend the Movado watch company. Well, Aidonia... beef eaten.



# XLR8R'S "PERSON OF THE YEAR" CONTEST

Grab a prize pack of CDs, books, games, and t-shirts in this kiss-2007-goodbye contest.

Around this time of year, the XLR8R crew constantly goes back and forth on who we believe is the year's most important artist. But what we can't argue is the fact that 2007 was an incredible year for music, art, and culture. For the final contest of the year, we've gathered a smattering of some of our favorite things from the past 12 months, in the form of CDs (Boys Noize's *Oi Oi Oi*, Well Deep: *Ten Years of Big Dada Recordings*, Daft Punk's *Alive*, Matthew Africa's *Dirty R&B: The Best of R. Kelly*), books (David Shrigley's *Worried Noodles*), games (*Assassin's Creed* for XBOX 360), and clothing (Matthew Africa's "Free Kells" tee). Tell us who your Person of the Year is, and why (in less than 200 words), and you just might take home the prizes above, *TIME Magazine* be damned!

**Two grand-prize winners will receive:** A "Free Kells" t-shirt and a copy of each of the CDs, games, and books listed.

**Two runners-up will receive:** A copy of each of the CDs, games, and books listed.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email. Entries must be received by March 15, 2008. Send your entry to XLR8R's "Person of the Year Contest," 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117, or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "XLR8R's Person of the Year Contest" in the subject line.

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EARN RESPECT  THE REST WILL FOLLOW





# MIKA MIKO

L.A. NOISE-PUNKS KEEP IT STUPID-SIMPLE.

Known for rowdy live shows and a sloppy approach to punk rock that owes as much to Reagan Youth as X-Ray Spex, L.A.'s Mika Miko is having a blast. In 2007 alone, the all-girl combo released the *666* EP (PPM), toured the U.S. twice, and went to Europe for the first time with their buds No Age. But for five close friends who would sooner quote *Space Jam* than take themselves seriously, that much work couldn't have been easier.

"When we started the band, it was all just playing house parties, hanging out in a basement, and writing music," says drummer Kate Hall, phoning it in from an East Coast Target store where she and guitarist Michelle Suarez are eating popcorn and playing with little kids. "It's just for fun, and it's much better having that attitude."

Suarez adds that the group, which formed in 2003, was essentially the catalyst for how they learned to play. "I vaguely remember our first practice, which wasn't a practice," she recalls. "We were like, 'Hey, I know one chord!' Eventually, my friend asked me if we wanted to play a show. We didn't even know how to tune our guitars, and we had four songs that weren't even really songs."

Though they now have hundreds of shows under their belts, they're still just hanging out. "It's literally just one big chill party in the van," Suarez offers. "We just sing along to Wipers and Misfits and Black Flag, or we make up songs, new dumb inside jokes, and read gossip magazines, *Scientific American*, and *National Geographic*."

That's not to say that their road escapades haven't produced their share of debauchery. Take, for example, Kate's drunken birthday mishap with a broken toilet in Minneapolis. "We opened it up to try and fix it, and the whole toilet exploded, covering the whole fucking bathroom in water! We were soaking wet," she explains through gasps of laughter. "We went up to this attic where we were sleeping, and I passed out on this pillow. Then I woke up and looked down and the pillow was covered—I mean end-to-end—in the nastiest hair! Because my face was wet, I had all this hair on my face. That was the worst morning ever, but it was totally worth it, because I woke up half-wolverine."

Though finishing another tour is the first thing on their minds, they're also fantasizing about the future. "We haven't really had time to sit down, smoke tons of weed, and write some psychedelic, 10-minute anthems," Hall says. "What we really want is to go home, reset our lives, and just start writing new songs and playing really sweet L.A. parties and warehouses."

[www.myspace.com/mikamiko](http://www.myspace.com/mikamiko)



## FIVE STAR: BRADLEY FRY

Pissed Jeans' brooding guitarist offers his favorite out-of-print hardcore classics.

Along with contemporaries like Fucked Up and Clockcleaner, Pissed Jeans are leading the renaissance of noisy hardcore revivalists. But where many bands imitate standard-bearers to perpetuate a fad, Pissed Jeans seeks to reinvent. *Hope For Men*, their sophomore full-length (and first for Sub Pop), combines the self-loathing lyrics of '80s hardcore bands Flipper and Black Flag with the feral

noise rock of the '90s Touch and Go roster, all filtered through their piss-taking sense of humor. The result is a colossal mess for hardcore nerds and noise fans alike. To prove he's done his homework, guitarist Bradley Fry shows off five of his prized rarities. *Josiah Hughes*  
[www.whitedenim.com/pissedjeans](http://www.whitedenim.com/pissedjeans), [www.subpop.com](http://www.subpop.com)

**SEEMS TWICE**  
**NON-PLUSSED 7"**  
 (Doublethink, 1980)

This record took me forever to find and was well worth it. Punk, hardcore, Australian weirdness of the early '80s. It's all in there. Twelve short songs that leave you wanting more. Kind of like a faster, raw-er Wire.

**AMERICAN DREAM**  
**S/T 12"**  
 (America, 1984)

This record is special to me since this band is from Lehigh Valley, PA. This thing never shows up anywhere, but should be on everyone's wantlist. Eight songs of quality hardcore from 1984 that sound like they were from much earlier than that.

**S.N.O.T.**  
**SLAUGHTERHOUSE**  
 (KML, 1986)

Slime from the Nose Of Texas. Nine songs on this single that remind me of some strange mix of the speed of DRI, the solos of Violent Children, and the mosh parts of Breakdown.

**SUSPENSE MURDER**  
**"WITH THE AXE"**  
 (Neo, 1981)

A killer four-song 7" from this Dutch band, formerly known as the Neo-Punkz. Super snotty hardcore. The first time I heard "Crazy Sod," I was hooked.

**RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED**  
**"INNOCENCE"**  
 (Little Farmer, 1984)

A greaser-looking guy on vocals, a nerd on drums, a future member of White Zombie on guitar, and some dude who looks like a young Derrick Turnbow [of the Milwaukee Brewers] on bass—a formula for success.

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## NEO-CONSCIOUS

Brooklyn boys Mishka and JK5 put their brains together for a new clothing collabo.

Many people's childhood action figures ended up broken and discarded in dusty thrift-store bins, but for 36 years, Joseph Ari Aloï has kept his plasticine best friends close to his heart—and his art. Much of the work of this bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, and sometimes blunted Brooklyn artist (also known as JK5) is inspired by toys and TV, erasing the lines between personal and spiritual mythology and pop culture. Fellow Brooklynites Greg Rivera and Mikhail Bortnik—the duo behind the Mishka brand—became kindred spirits with Aloï when they shared a warehouse building in Williamsburg with Saved Tattoo, where JK5 spends days grafting fantastical images onto bare skin. Bonding over a shared obsession with *Star Wars*, toys, and satire, they embarked on a collaboration to turn Aloï's 1999 book *Subconsoithesaurusnex* into a clothing collection. The three tore apart the book's 432 pages to create two giant collages, which form the basis of a color-saturated all-over print that adorns a sweatshirt, shorts, a New Era hat, and the lining of several cut 'n' sew items (such as a hoodie embroidered with a hot-pink brain). Bucking the trend of streetwear that's bereft of meaning, the print is rife with veiled references, doodled parodies, and even a photo of Joseph's dad. Part of Mishka's Spring '08 line-up, JK5's collection will be in stores in mid-February, around the time the clothing line opens their flagship on Broadway and Keap Streets in Brooklyn. Prepare to bug out. *Tyra Bangs*  
www.jk5nyc.com, www.mishkanyc.com



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- GamePro

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- Game Informer

10 out of 10 / 10 out of 10

- Game Informer

- Wired.com

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- Yahoo! Games

- GamePro

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- PC Gamer UK

"More so than any other game in recent memory, BioShock is dripping with atmosphere and intrigue, and it's one of those rare titles where story, dialogue and character development are just as important as the action sequences."

- USA Today



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Words Ross Holland  
Photo Nicholas Lorden



## WHITE WILLIAMS

A BEDROOM PRODUCER CAPITALIZES ON THE TENSION BETWEEN REAL-TIME STRUMMING AND SHEER COMPUTER TRICKERY.

The myth of the introspective, tortured solo artist is archetypal. Reclusive, drug-addled, and depressed—it's the stuff of Eric Clapton biographies and countless episodes of *Behind the Music*. But it's not White Williams.

Instead, Williams (real name: Joe Williams) is part of the new but increasingly familiar sect of solo electronic pop acts able to transport their home studios to the live stage with ease. He wrote, composed, performed, and engineered the entirety of his debut LP, *Smoke* (Tigerbeat6), by himself—and, on the surface at least, there's nothing tortured about him or the album.

"I've been really comfortable with being by myself," Williams happily professes via phone from Brooklyn, where he recently moved after graduating school in Cleveland. "I like to have the spontaneity of saying, 'Okay, I feel like working on this part of the song,' and

I don't have to jump in a car to go meet with people."

As a debut release—solo or not—*Smoke* is striking. At once poppy and experimental, melodious and atonal, *Smoke* drifts through the diverse genres of surf rock, psych, and hip-hop as easily as Williams' unaffected vocals coolly hover over beats and guitars. In many ways, it's an album about recording albums, an LP full of self-conscious deconstruction. Williams seems to love the process, and never lets the listener get too comfortable—a bright-eyed pop chorus will crash suddenly into stuttering, synthesizer distortion; vocals and guitars shift pitch from normality to nonsense.

This tension between actual instruments and computers, between pop and electronic, is something that Williams, like many of his contemporaries, exploits. "When I started picking up real instruments, I realized

that you can use still use software, but things don't have to come from inside a computer," Williams says. "I lack a proficiency in playing guitar, in playing bass, and even a lot of my drum skills have deteriorated over the years, but something I've always known is effects, or how to re-pitch something, or how to copy and paste. There's knowledge that never left me from making computer-based music."

Williams concedes that a producer or "engineer at the very least" could be helpful when working on his next album, but "only if it's not invading on [his] process for songwriting." After hearing the jolting rewards of *Smoke*, it's unlikely that anybody would want to.

White Williams' *Smoke* is out now on Tigerbeat6.  
[www.myspace.com/whitewilliams](http://www.myspace.com/whitewilliams)



## COOKIN' UP HISTORY — AGAIN.

Grandmaster Flash is not just the Creator of the Quik Mix Theory — he's a Scientist. From his groundbreaking appearance in *Wildstyle* cutting, rubbing and mixing in the kitchen to his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Flash demands the best from himself and his gear.

Over the last 25 years, Flash has evolved as a DJ and Producer, and naturally so has his DJ setup. In anticipation, he waited for a digital vinyl system that could deliver the purest analog feel while giving him new tools to take his technique into the future.

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what moves you



# BOYS NOIZE

A GERMAN FUZZ-HOUSE INGÉNUÉ  
TURNS TOTAL PARTY THRASHER.

Like many of us, Berlin's Boys Noize (a.k.a. Alex Ridha) got a jump-start on music as a youth thanks to an older sibling with good taste. "When I was about six, I heard old-school rap and house coming from my brother's room. It must've stuck," Ridha says with a laugh. During his childhood, he took up piano but quickly switched to drums because, as he puts it, "Somehow I was always into beats." At just 14, Ridha started DJing and producing, playing his first gig two years later (for 500 people) in his hometown of Hamburg.

While he's been making music ever since, international acclaim didn't come as quickly as that initial live show. Ridha released the first Boys Noize record, "The Bomb," on DJ Hell's Gigolo imprint in 2004, and another on Datapunk a year later, but in minimalist Berlin, folks were slow to pick up on his maximal sound. "After [those records] I didn't get many bookings," he says. His style—floor-shaking techno with a distinct club appeal—owes much more to French house than, say, Kompakt. But in 2004, Ridha, a skilled remixer, tweaked a track by a then-barely known Bloc Party. His buoyant reworking of the Brit post-post-punkers' "Banquet" caught the ear of many notable DJs—including Erol Alkan and Turbo label boss Tiga—and dovetailed with the hype that the band was enjoying. After more production work and thunderous DJ sets, Ridha started his own label, Boysnoize Records, in 2005. Just a few more high-profile remixes (one in particular for Kaiser Chiefs' "Everyday I Love You Less and Less") later, Boys Noize had become a hot item on the European club circuit.

Cut to 2007, and things have come full circle from those early obstacles. While Justice and the Ed Banger crew—sonic relatives and close friends of Ridha—garner massive worldwide attention, Boys Noize's once uncool sound has become all the rage (though Ridha's the first to point out the differences between his and Justice's work). And Boys Noize has an excellent new album—a collection of 12-inches, actually—*Oi Oi Oi*, to accompany his newfound attention. The songs that appear on the record, such as the booming "The Battery" and the anthemic "Let's Buy Happiness," are singles that Ridha initially produced for his DJ sets because, as he explains, "I couldn't find many tracks that I liked enough in the record shop." Here, they're bundled into a roaring hour of techno that incorporates Bomb Squad-esque production, Modeselektor-ish glitchiness, and, occasionally, Justice-like distortion. But Boys Noize's sound is all his own—cleaner and harder than that of his French counterparts. And if you haven't pumped your fists to it already, you will.

Boys Noize's *Oi Oi Oi* is out now on Last Gang/Turbo.  
[www.myspace.com/boysnoizemusic](http://www.myspace.com/boysnoizemusic)

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1



2



11



3



5



4



7



8



9



10



5



6

## Lighten Up

As the days get darker, you'll need some bright, shiny things to cheer you up. From Perspex fangs to a pocket temperature gauge, these accessories will ensure you don't get left out in the cold.

1. Innervisions t-shirt (€25)  
[www.innercityvisions.com](http://www.innercityvisions.com)

2. Made by White  
Kiss of Death necklace (AUS \$55)  
[www.madebywhite.com](http://www.madebywhite.com)

3. Mint & Serf Tin Can speaker set (\$99.99)  
[www.boostmobile.com](http://www.boostmobile.com)

4. Mishka Boney M cap (\$45)  
[www.mishkanyc.com](http://www.mishkanyc.com)

5. Akari Beehive table lamp (\$95)  
[www.momastore.org](http://www.momastore.org)

6. Baby-G Sweet Poison watch (\$79)  
[www.gshock.com](http://www.gshock.com)

7. 80/20 Lexi high-top shoe (\$96)  
[www.eightytwenty.com](http://www.eightytwenty.com)

8. Muji Weather Station  
[www.muji.com](http://www.muji.com)

9. Luey Drinking toy by Bob Dob (\$19.99)  
[www.strange.co](http://www.strange.co)

10. Pinhole camera kit (\$35)  
[www.momastore.org](http://www.momastore.org)

11. Grn Apple Tree cap (\$40)  
[www.grnappletree.com](http://www.grnappletree.com)

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## GREY GARDENS

Dying plants and faded photos create a striking image for Lawrence's melancholy, minimal house-scapes.

Peter M. Kersten is a former gardener with a known fondness for watching plants grow and perish. Indeed, it's easy to imagine this DJ/producer's atmospheric house, deep ambient, and minimal techno soundtracking time-lapse footage of wilting flowers and falling leaves.

Fitting, then, that the cover of Kersten's second album under the Lawrence moniker (2003's *The Absence of Blight*) features resolutely grey photographs of dead plants. The snaps were taken in his hometown of Hamburg, Germany where, he says, you will always find beauty beneath the ugliness.

The follow-up, 2005's *The Night Will Last Forever* (Novamute), extended the horticultural theme inside (via track titles such as "The Lawn" and "Crippled Trees") while its Joy Division-inspired layout and typography, and its sleeve image of a washed-out crowd shot—sapped of definition and bleached of intensity—helped solidify the bleak, monochromatic aesthetic quickly becoming Lawrence's trademark.

Kersten, who created the cover art for the album and its three singles, says the results were a happy accident. "I collected old, destroyed negatives of photos at my parents' place and tried to reproduce them," he recalls. "The results were amazing... The main destructive effects were actually a byproduct of scanning them the wrong way, a mistake that made them look unreal and aged. Everybody

seems to have memories that fit the pictures but nobody knows what exactly is on them. Even my parents couldn't give me an answer."

The cover art for Lawrence's recently released retrospective *Low Lights From the Past and Future* continues the theme, with artist Anna Möller "destroying" new pictures to make them look akin to those of the previous album. The introduction of color, albeit restrained, is intended to show the link between past and future, says Kersten.

"I love the texture of all those pictures," he concludes. "Your mind is driven by all the details and not by the colors. You learn to watch the details again." *David Hemingway*

*Low Lights From the Past and Future* is out now on Dial. [www.dial-rec.de](http://www.dial-rec.de)



Lawrence



## CHRIS SCHLARB

A LONG BEACH FAMILY MAN EXPLORES LOSS THROUGH FREE JAZZ AND STATIC.

As the head honcho of experimental noise imprint Sounds Are Active, and a member of free-jazz troupes I Heart Lung and Create (!), it's a small miracle that Chris Schlarb finds time to do production work for artists like Liz Janes and Bizzart, not to mention raising a nine-year-old daughter and a six-year-old son.

In between all his other projects—and life's twists and turns—he also found time to create *Twilight and Ghost Stories* (Asthmatic Kitty), his first solo record under his given name. The album was the byproduct of a divorce that left him alone in an empty house, explains Schlarb. "I know a lot of people that would look at their wife and kids leaving them, unfortunately, as this great liberation, like, 'Now I can do whatever I want.' For me, it was the exact opposite.

I'm a total family man, I don't go out, and I don't drink. To have my kids taken away... it was like somebody died."

Collaborative in the deepest sense, *Twilight and Ghost Stories* is built from fragments of sounds submitted by musicians Schlarb admires. A combination of pastoral compositions and disarming field recordings, the record employs talents as varied as Asthmatic Kitty founder Sufjan Stevens, instrument-maker and Matmos collaborator Walter Kitundu, Dirty Projectors' Dave Longstreth, and Philip Glass Ensemble percussionist Mick Rossi. "Getting in touch with all these friends and strangers allowed me to be validated by them artistically without any of the baggage of my situation," he explains. "It was a real artistic escape."

In the five years that it took to complete *Twilight and Ghost Stories*, Schlarb remarried and came to an amicable custody agreement. This balance of loss and reconciliation shines through on the record. "Throughout the composition, there are things that are very beautiful-sounding, and then there's this counterpoint of noise or static," he explains. "It was the same thing for me. There were beautiful moments that happened in the time I was working on this, and a horrible event in my life caused it to exist in the first place. But as it stands now, I can't really say I would change anything that has happened in the intervening years."

Chris Schlarb's *Twilight and Ghost Stories* is out now on Asthmatic Kitty. [www.chrisschlarb.com](http://www.chrisschlarb.com)

# GOOD STUFF

A few of Kid Acne's favorite things.

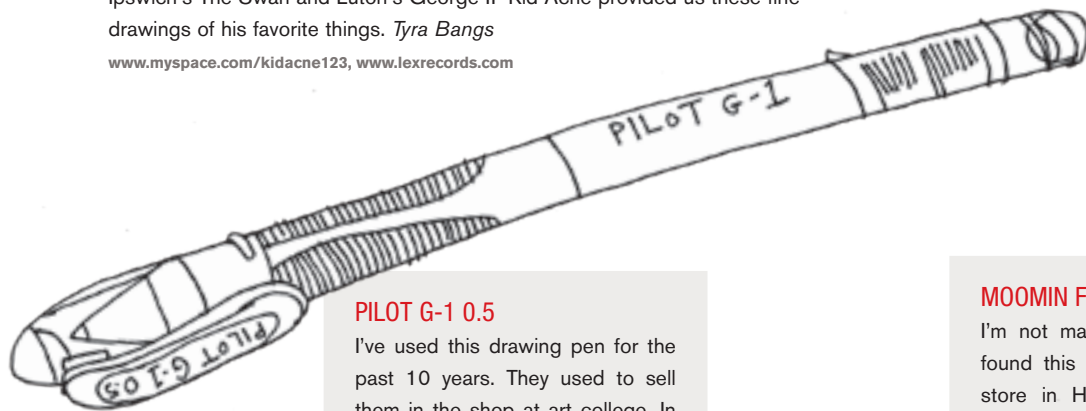
He's *baaaaaack*. On September 17, U.K. hip-hop prankster/chip-shop gangster Kid Acne delivered *Romance Is Dead*, another dose of punchy, balls-out old-school punk rap on Lex Records. "The songs are shorter, the lyrics are better, and the whole thing only lasts half an hour. Smash-and-grab hip-hop!" explains the affable MC from his "typical terrace house in Sheffield (the kind you see on *Coronation Street*)." When he's not busy penning lyrics about Ray-Bans and step aerobics, our Kid is, of course, a renowned graffiti artist, whose designs grace Montana spraypaint cans, knitted sweaters, and walls from Barcelona to Baku, Azerbaijan (yes, really). He's also into Pete Nice and David Attenborough telly programs, and reminds you not to front on British food (faves include Barnsley Chops, faggots, and black pudding). In the midst of a pub tour to promote the new record—with pint-pullin' stops at Ipswich's The Swan and Luton's George II—Kid Acne provided us these fine drawings of his favorite things. *Tyra Bangs*

[www.myspace.com/kidacne123](http://www.myspace.com/kidacne123), [www.lexrecords.com](http://www.lexrecords.com)



### BLAIREAU PIN BADGE

I fucked up the proportions a bit, but this was a present from my friend Susan. It's a pin badge of a badger reading a book. She found it at a car-boot sale near Paris. *Blaireau* is French for badger—it's a kind of an affectionate insult that my French buddies call one another. I wear this on the side of my flat cap. *J'ai kifffes*.

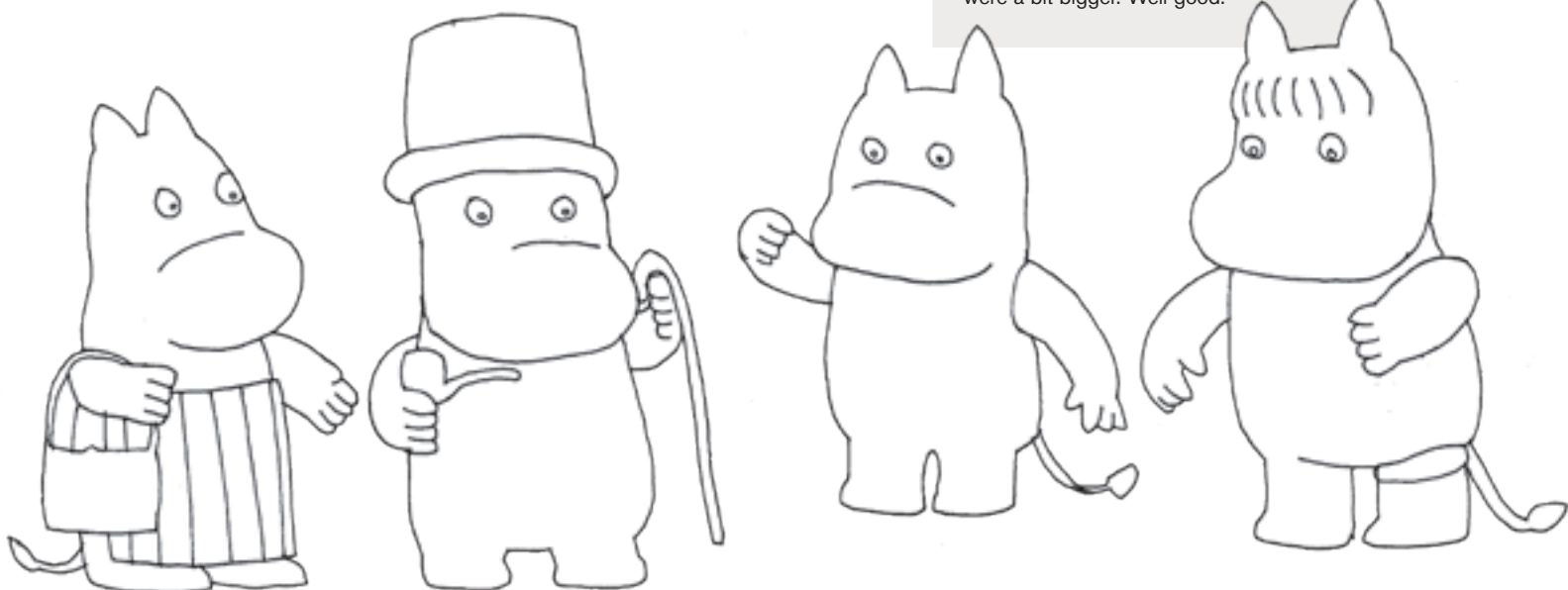


### PILOT G-1 0.5

I've used this drawing pen for the past 10 years. They used to sell them in the shop at art college. In a paranoid fear of them ever being discontinued, I bought myself a bulk load last year but my supply is running low. I'll order some more this week, I think. I love these pens.

### MOOMIN FIGURES

I'm not massively into vinyl toys, but I found this little bunch in a department store in Helsinki. I used to love the Moomins animation—the one with felt, not the cartoon version. My Zebra Face character, which I made a comic book of a few years back, is kind of based on Moomins, so I guess if I did make any vinyl toys myself they'd end up looking something like this. They had a felt version too, which were a bit bigger. Well good.



# Upper Playground x superFishal



Aesop Rock's new album "None Shall Pass" out now. For tour dates go to [www.definitivejux.net](http://www.definitivejux.net)

[upperplayground.com](http://upperplayground.com)  
[superfishalsf.com](http://superfishalsf.com)





## WHAT IS IT? BOUNCE MUSIC

New Orleans' raunchy musical gumbo lives on.

While it developed concurrently with Miami bass and Memphis buck, no regional sound has influenced the slang and styles of the Dirty South more than New Orleans bounce music.

Mardi Gras Indian chants and early hip-hop's call-and-response routines equally inform the swinging, uptempo hip-hop offshoot, which almost invariably features sample elements of the Showboys' "Drag Rap" (a.k.a. "Triggerman") and Derek B's "Rock the Beat" (known in New Orleans as "Brown Beat"), along with shout-outs to New Orleans' wards and projects.

But while some elements of bounce—mainly crude lyrics—can be found in early releases by Warren Mayes and Bustdown, Crescent City rappers generally followed national hip-hop trends until 1991, when MC T Tucker and DJ Irv recorded "Where Dey At?" for a cassette-only release known as the "Red Tape."

Based around repetitive chants ("Shake that ass like a saltshaker!"), "Where Dey At?" was the first studio recording to combine the inclusive energy of the city's block parties and all-night clubs with the propulsive "Triggerman" beat.

"We'd been using 'Triggerman' since it came out, chopping that beat, getting gangster with it, dancing with it," explains veteran bounce artist and special-ed teacher DJ Jubilee. "But Tucker took that sound and 'rawed' it with uncut, streetwise lyrics."

DJ Jimi's "(The Original) Where They At?" became the first bounce record released nationally, and UNLV and Juvenile solidified bounce's nursery-rhyme flow on "Another Bitch" and "Bounce

for the Juvenile," respectively. In 1993, Jubilee added the last piece to the puzzle by turning popular dances from the high-school socials he was DJing into fodder for "Do the Jubilee All," a G-rated anthem that allowed X-rated themes to follow.

As New Orleans rappers like Baby, Master P, and Juvenile (who lifted the hook for "Back That Azz Up" from Jubilee) broke nationally in the late '90s, bounce declined in popularity before gaining a second wind with the unlikely emergence of cross-dressing "sissy" rappers like Katey Red and Big Freedia several years later. "Their music transcends the boundaries of gay and straight, which speaks to the uniqueness of New Orleans and also that bounce has always had a larger female market," says Matt Miller, director of the bounce documentary *Ya Heard Me?* "The music's in conversation with the audience. It's not about talking about yourself or politics, even though there's all sorts of individual spins put on it. The voice is exhortational."

Shot between 2002 and 2007, *Ya Heard Me?* provides glimpses of the rich scene both before and after Hurricane Katrina. But while the later scenes are depressing, recent developments (bounce nights sprouting up in Atlanta and Dallas; the rise of a new generation of artists like Nake Niggidy, Peecachoo and Gotty Boi Chris, Beyonce's bounce-inspired "Get Me Bodied") suggest that the music will bounce back from the disaster. *Jesse Serwer* [www.yaheardmefilm.com](http://www.yaheardmefilm.com)

Head to [xlr8r.com/113extras](http://xlr8r.com/113extras) to download this artwork as wallpaper.



## SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world.

It's December and Justice still won't go away, which is fine by us. For their "performance" on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* back in October, the French duo enlisted look-alikes of Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Rod Stewart, Prince, and Rick James to lip-sync to "D.A.N.C.E." while they waited off to the side. YouTube that shit • The cover art of Trentemøller's *Chronicles* now adorns outfits created by Danish fashion designers Anna Rose Hiort-Lorenzen and Sofie Nørregaard. Buy the t-shirts, scarves, and dresses online at [www.conzoom.com](http://www.conzoom.com) • For its 15th anniversary, Chicago label Thrill Jockey will release a limited-edition boxed set of seven-inches later this month. Thrill Jockey bands will cover their favorite Thrill Jockey songs. (The Sea and Cake redo Califone's "Spider's House" and Tortoise takes on Nobukazu Takemura's "Falls Lake," for example.) Even David Byrne drops in for a rendition of The Fiery Furnaces' "Ex Guru." That's a whole lotta Thrill Jockey. • Also on the Chicago rock tip, Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan is lending his support to the Bob Moog Foundation to save the archives of inventor of the modern synthesizer. "His ideas far transcend use in just music, and to this day continue to have impact in everything from rock to rap to quantum physics," Corgan

said in a press release. Moog's archives, which his family would like to have in their museum honoring the engineer, are in dire need of attention as they were left in an un-air-conditioned warehouse near his home in Asheville, NC. "I humbly also ask any fan of electronic music to consider a donation to the foundation, in recognition of his influence on many of your favorite musical artists," Corgan went on to say. Visit [www.moogfoundation.org](http://www.moogfoundation.org) to donate. • If you missed its limited theatrical run, Sidetrack Films (*Favela Rising*, *Beautiful Losers*) will release a DVD version of *Kurt Cobain About a Son*, a documentary based on more than 25 hours of unheard audio interviews conducted by music journalist Michael Azerrad, originally for his book *Come As You Are: The Story of Nirvana*. See more at [www.sidetrackfilms.com](http://www.sidetrackfilms.com). • Everyone's starting a digital-music portal these days, so it was only a matter of time before vinyl purveyors extraordinaire Turntable Lab got in on the racket. DL ur totes fave n00 hits at [www.turntablelab.com](http://www.turntablelab.com). • Missed Os Mutantes' reunion tour last year? Pick up *Mutantes Live: Barbican Theater, London, 2006* (Luaka Bop) for the second best thing. • Aphex Twin's "Avril 14th" was sampled in a music-video sketch on *Saturday Night Live* in October. NBC uploaded Andy Samberg's "I

Ran So Far" parody to YouTube before securing digital rights to the Aphex Twin song, and could now face legal charges. • Patrick Watson (it's a band, not just a dude) took home Canada's Polaris Music Prize (the country's Shortlist or Mercury Prize equivalent) for Best Album, beating out Arcade Fire, The Besnard Lakes, Feist, Junior Boys, Chad VanGaal, and The Dears. • You wouldn't normally hear the names Timbaland and *One Life to Live* in the same sentence, but in October the hip-hop producer performed on the long-running soap opera. We haven't the foggiest idea why. • This month, Vice Books will

release a 13-year photo retrospective, featuring new work from and interviews with their usual cast of hipster-sleaze-shooting characters like Terry Richardson, Ryan McGinley, and Richard Kern. The 336-pager will showcase *Vice's* "lush fashion, thought-provoking news stories, and lots of blood and naked people." Coffee-table porn never looked so civilized. • R.I.P. reggae singer Lucky Dube, 43, and Psychic TV member Lady Jaye Breyer P-Orridge, 38.

1. Os Mutantes
2. Photo from *The Vice Photo Book*
3. Patrick Watson
4. Nobukazu Takemura
5. Trentemøller dress
6. Tortoise



### 1. DDGROOVES "TIME TO SLAM DUNK"

This is one of the loosest songs I've ever heard. Sounds like Barry White trying to rap.

### 2. AKEEM OLAJUWON "THE UNBEATABLE DREAM"

Sounds like a bad MC Hammer over "Freak-A-Zoid."

### 3. G-FIVE "KEEP IT ON"

This is from Philly 1983 and is about the 76ers. A good boogie track, similar to Tyrone Brunson's "The Smurf."

### 4. HURT 'EM BAD "N.B.A."

Catchy lyrics and probably the only song here good enough for a non-basketball event.

### 5. BICE "BASKETBALL"

I can't figure this one out, but it definitely stands out from the rest. Check it on iTunes.

### 6. HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS "SWEET GEORGIA BROWN"

When I opened for the Beasties, I started with this one and just started talking shit over it. Still not sure why.

### 7. M.C. MR. D "BAD BOYS"

I found this 7" on eBay, but had no idea it was a basketball song 'til it arrived.

### 8. ULTRAMAGNETIC MCS "NBA ALLSTARS"

Kool Keith and Ced Gee trade verses about their favorites of the early '90s over a James Brown track.

### 9. MEN AT PLAY "DR JAM (IN THE SLAM)"

I bought this more for the instrumental version, but eventually the vocals grew on me.

### 10. SHOCK "SLAM DUNK"

A funk group from the '70s trying to rap in the '80s. I got this from James Pants, but Baron Zen told me he'd put it on a mixtape a while back.

Peanut Butter Wolf's 2K8: *B-Ball Zombie War* (Stones Throw/2K) is out now. [www.myspace.com/pbwolf](http://www.myspace.com/pbwolf)



Peanut Butter Wolf (photo by Joao Canziani)



ARTIST OF THE YEAR:

# SWITCH

RELUCTANT STAR SWITCH UNLEASHES THE YEAR'S BEST IN SPLIT-PERSONALITY HOUSE AND ENVELOPE-PUSHING POP.  
WORDS: VIVIAN HOST



## Switch is not what you think he is. You might even say he's double-sided.

There's one Switch who never wants the party to end, a prankster who dreads being bored. Then there's another—Dave Taylor—who is low-key and understated, owns a farmhouse in Cheshire, and has a few carefully plotted plans to turn pop music on its ear.

It's 7 p.m. on a rainy Friday night. The lychee martinis are starting to flow and that means I've got the mellow Switch sitting across from me. We're in a noisy Thai restaurant in Echo Park, a few minutes' drive away from The Echo where, just hours from now, Switch's mix of choppy,

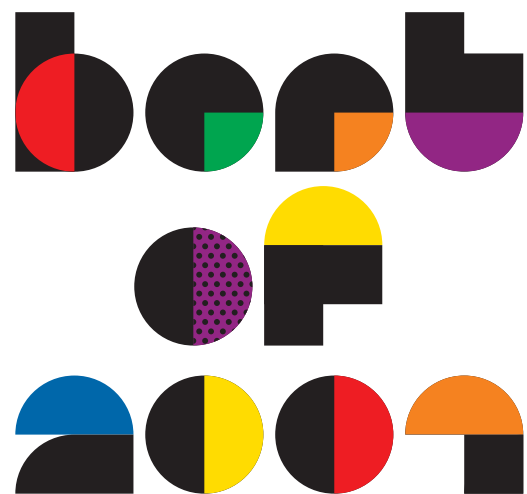
eccentric, bassline-driven house will confuse the L.A. kids who've come to hear Diplo rock hits from the blog and Snoop Doggy Dogg.

Where Diplo is known for mixing up styles from record to record, Switch mixes up styles within individual tracks, piling bizarre elements upon a 4/4 framework until each song is a crazy stew of references and sounds. It ain't jock house—it's jocular house, with plenty of fun samples (guns cocking, whistles) and more pitch-shifted, cut-up vocals than a *Best of Freestyle* compilation. And then there's that signature Switch bass—buzzy and synthetic, careening up and down the scale to create a propulsive wave that's maddening in the headphones and devastating on the dancefloor. Switch puts the fun back into house with an

absolute disregard for purity and the element of surprise shows up everywhere; this is best illustrated in his remixes, such as his take on P. Diddy's "Tell Me," a carnival ride whose breakdown consists of a full minute of Christina Aguilera's acapella backed by... nothing.

### HIP-HOUSE?

"I love doing that crazy, crazy breakdown where you think it's going to go off and go somewhere and it doesn't; instead it comes back real minimal," says Taylor between bites of spring rolls and satay. Having already added his own trademarks to dance music, and even spearheaded his own genre—more on the aptly named fidget house later—Taylor continues to muse about how to do things differently.



It was a bright, colorful year for sight and sound. Psychedelic '60s influences seeped into songwriting; shimmering shards of Italo-disco madness surged forth; fluo fashions and the bigger, brasher side of machine beats dominated the dance scene *and* the punk-rock underground. Days spent on YouTube and high-speed downloading were not in vain, turning up new beats, dance crazes, and micro-scenes from every corner of the planet. In the midst of all this madness, Switch kicked house in the ass and added a unique perspective to pop, making him our pick for favorite artist of 2007. LCD Soundsystem, R. Kelly, and even boat shoes turned up in our annual survey of the year's best and worst. For the sixth year running, we present our favorite quips and barbs from friends, contributors, XLR8R artists, and pundits around the world. Read them, weep, and gear up to get busy in 2008. *Vivian Host & Ken Taylor*





"PEOPLE WANT RECORDS THAT GET IN, DO SOMETHING DRAMATIC, AND MAKE YOU THROW YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR."

Currently, he's thinking about making three-minute bangers.

"I'm definitely learning to hear my music in a different way right now," explains Taylor of touring the U.S. with Diplo. "In Europe, I'm the one that's crazy when I come on [to DJ]. Playing with [Diplo] I feel like the tame one. And the amount of music that people consume right now, they don't want to listen to the same record for six minutes. People want records that get in, do something dramatic, and make you throw your hands in the air. If you look at the way hip-hop DJs work stuff, you could do that with house music. I think that would make house more appealing on a bigger scale. Let's make it

a little more short, sharp, sweet, and... rubbish!"

#### SWITCH STANCE

Taylor doesn't actually want to make rubbish—it's just that he says that word a lot, and it often interrupts a sentence when he feels like he's getting too deep or serious or silly-sounding. He's self-deprecating, and speaks fondly of friends back home who tease him for what he does. Though he would love to be part of a groundbreaking music movement—and is presently amassing a stable of collaborators to help make it happen—he doesn't want to be the center of attention.

"I don't even usually do interviews and stuff,"

says Taylor. "If I'm working with [someone], it's about producing [them] and I'm not even bothered if my name's not on it. It's not like I'm shy. It's just not me. I don't really want to be like a Timbaland or Pharrell, where they're almost like artists themselves. It just isn't my nature to be like, 'Look at me!' I love seeing people that have that quality, and I just see myself as a facilitator of people that want to do that."

#### FLIPPING OUT

Growing up in an old section of Harlow, Essex, about 30 miles East of London, Taylor has always been looking for something different. "When all my mates wanted to stay in the pub,

I'd be up in London on my own, going to clubs and stuff," he recalls. "I was really into soul and R&B, like all those early Teddy Riley records, new jack swing. Everybody would be listening to crazy rock records and I'd be trying to sell my mixtapes that I made off the radio with Soul II Soul on them."

Luckily, Taylor had older friends he had met through a shared love of Man Parrish, Bambaataa, and breakdancing. "When [the local breakdancing crews] were having burns against different schools, I'd be the little mincer that they'd bring in at the end to do a backflip," he explains. A few years later, the same dudes started producing early jungle tracks for the Labello Blanco label and Taylor would often hang around their studio. "The first time I saw someone using a mixing desk and soloing the drums—actually deconstructing records that I was already familiar with as a whole record and me hearing it in different parts—I was about 15 or 16," recalls Taylor. "And that was it. I just thought that was the coolest thing in the world."

Taylor messed around a bit with early drum & bass—appearing with Paradox on Mixrace's seminal 180-bpm release "Too Bad For Ya" (Moving Shadow) in 1992—but soon tired of the scene, and nearly abandoned production entirely until he saw U.S. house maestros Todd Terry and Kenny Dope spin at a London warehouse party. "I remember thinking, 'Shit! This is it,'" recalls Taylor with a grin. "My girlfriend was studying in the South of France, so I gave up my job, bought a computer and a sampler and went and lived with her for a year."

#### HOUSE CALLS

By the 2000s, Taylor was recording for the likes of Slip 'N' Slide, Freerange, and his own Dubsided imprint under the name

Solid Groove. He and Jesse Rose teamed up to form Induceve, and with Trevor Loveys he created the first incarnation of Switch, releasing Freerange classics like "Get Ya Dub On" and "Just Bounce 2 This" that prefigured his current sound.

But perhaps the most important indicator of big things to follow came in 2005. Both M.I.A.'s "Pull Up the People"—co-produced by Taylor (under the name A. Brucker)—and "Love Guide" (a collabo with Miss Thing for Wall of Sound's Two Culture Clash) were busting out of stereotypes from U.K. to the U.S.A. DJs from all genres were obsessing over surprise banger "This Is Sick" and "A Bit Patchy," a bootleg that twisted Incredible Bongo Band's "Apache" into a perfect fusion of hip-hop and house. Taylor and Rose had begun seeding the media with the name "fidget house," to see if the press would make a movement out of the music that their crew—which also includes Loveys, Sinden, Herve, and Duke Dumont—was producing.

#### ON THE MOVE

While Switch's name was quickly becoming a mantra for some, few outside the club world or the MP3 blogosphere were accessing his sound. Not that Switch was too concerned with promo; he was busy traveling across the globe in search of new inspiration. A brief residency in New York brought him closer to American underground genres like Baltimore club, ghetto-tech, and juke. Then he was jetting off with M.I.A. to work on *Kala*, journeying to Southern India to record temple drummers for "Bird Flu," to Trinidad to channel soca's energy for "Boyz," and to St. Lucia (presumably to chill out).

All the while, he ran Dubsided and sparked two new endeavors with Sinden—the Counterfeet label and their Get Familiar party at Fabric in London. He

found some new vocalists (he's currently working with Santi White of Santogold and a Swedish singer and rapper called Mapei) and worked on beats for a dancehall album with Diplo in Jamaica. When we spoke, he had just returned from a crazy few weeks in Kingston, recording the genre's top shottas (Turbulence, Elephant Man, Lexxus, Gyptian, Leftside & Esco) for a double-disc to be released in spring or summer of 2008.

#### REBEL YELL

And yet, Switch remains restless. "I'm moving to L.A. because I'm *bored*," he exclaims, not quite joking. Taylor has been spending more and more time in the City of Angels as he works on a new album for Tricky, hoping to restore electronica's Basquiat to his moody hip-hop roots. (Switch also produced a track for Britney Spears—it didn't work out—and is rumored to be working on stuff for Missy Elliott's new record.) He plans to move to California next year, and, with his fidgety friends, start a full-service production house for artists.

"I think club music's been kind of dormant for a few years and it's finally coming back around again," he enthuses. "There's a really healthy movement going on in the States. Hip-hop is at an interesting point where people have grown out of what it has been. It seems like there's a big hole in the market for something fresh and exciting—a different presentation, a different mood. I don't know what's next, but I can hear something for a second and know if I want to fuck with it. That's my gauge."

[www.myspace.com/switchandsolidgroove](http://www.myspace.com/switchandsolidgroove),

[www.myspace.com/dubsided](http://www.myspace.com/dubsided),

[www.myspace.com/counterfeet](http://www.myspace.com/counterfeet)



### SMASH HITS Switch's Top Ten of 2007

#### 1. Mapei

You have to check for this girl. She's so stupid-good. Her rapping is the shit, her singing is the shit, she makes her own videos, and live she be on that crazee shit.

#### 2. Drop the Lime

Possibly the most original new club shit coming out of NYC at the moment. Word up, Luca.

#### 3. Duke Dumont

He is gonna bang! His ideas bang! His pro-

ductions bang and his DJ sets bang.

#### 4. DJs customizing tracks

This is making DJs interesting again. The element of surprise returns to the ones and twos.

#### 5. Erol Alkan

Possibly my favorite DJ on the planet at the moment. This dude is so studied... He's so sure of what he's doing it makes me want to give up.

#### 6. Jamaica

No dickheads. The most musically raw place I've ever been to. The relationship people have with music across the board there is so inspiring.

#### 7. Feist

Something I didn't expect to like. My favorite cool female pop voice this year.

#### 8. Australia

The most responsive club crowds I've witnessed in a while.

#### 9. Fabric

They kicked me off the decks at me and Sinden's own Get Familiar night because I *might* have had one too many and played the same Herve remix three times in a row.

#### 10. Justice

I wasn't with it! It was Diplo that made me listen to the album properly... It's a boring choice but they smashed that shat with a bat. Splat.



A. LCD Soundsystem  
 B. Digitalism  
 C. Lil' Wayne  
 D. Efdemin



**LCD Soundsystem**

2007 will go down as a very good year for LCD with the outstanding Nike album, the extremely well-received *Sound of Silver*, a pretty fucking tight live show, and "Someone Great," which is a future classic. Not only that but they're seriously down with the kids. How do they do that? Inspirational. *Duncan Stump, Tiny Sticks*

James, I salute you. You are a mad perfectionist and it comes through live and on record. "I wish that we could talk about it." *Gabriel Jaffe, Puma*

More focused than its predecessor and a damn-near-perfect fusion of dance and rock, *Sound of Silver* was the record I played more than anything else

in 2007. The emotive, thumping, one-two punch of "Someone Great" and "All My Friends" is my favorite stretch, but the whole thing's brilliant. *Joe Colly, XLR8R writer*

**EL-P**

This guy's a maniac and serious multi-tasker, but above all, he is obviously super-smart. What other release this year, hip-hop or otherwise, is as remotely rambunctious or original as *I'll Sleep When You're Dead?* *David Ma, XLR8R writer*

Truth is a powerful thing, which is why so many artists and politicians avoid it. But EL-P packed so much of it into *I'll Sleep When You're Dead*, with the help of so many all-stars, that only those who still

want to wave their hands in they air like the just don't care missed it. *Scott Thill, XLR8R writer*

**R. Kelly**

He killed it in 2007 by being the only R&B singer invited to kick cameo verses on every major rap remix alongside a bunch of rappers ("Make It Rain" being the most memorable). On the remix to "Same Girl," he manages to out-AutoTune T-Pain, kick a little freestyle, and then ask the audience to snap their fingers Michael Jackson-style, while imitating MJ's signature voice. *And* he still had the time to come up with a dozen crazy new *Trapped in the Closet* episodes this year. If anybody was still questioning the fact that R. Kelly's a genius, 2007 made it totally clear once and for all. *Teki Latex, TTC/Institubes*



**Stefan Goldmann**

Do I want to make sweet love or do I want to stab someone in the face repeatedly? Either way, Stefan's tracks are the perfect soundtrack to my more "expressive" moments. *JPLS, Minus*

**Boys Noize**

We play probably 15 of his tracks every night. That German guy could have been an Ed Banger artist. Respect! *Pedro "Busy P" Winter, Ed Banger*

**Lil' Wayne**

He came and ripped rap apart. His artistry and output grew this year like an angry Bruce Banner. You can't turn a radio on in the South without hearing a Wayne track. And his impact on the mixtape scene was

phenomenal; I especially loved the *Drought* series and DJ Benzi's mixtape. *Oliver Mak, Bodega*

Has he lost his mind? To quote: "Swimming laps around a bottle of Louis the 13th/Jumping off of a mountain into a sea of codeine." This dude seems like he's in a downward spiral into infinite genius. *Curses, Institubes*

**Surkin**

I have been intrigued, perplexed, excited, and scared by everything the boy has done this year. And he dances like Bryan Ferry. *Shaun Roberts, Fabric*

**Efdemin**

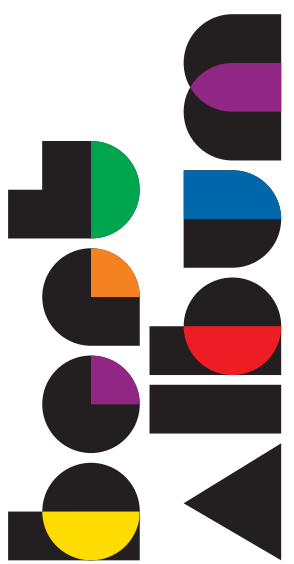
He is really talented and made some of the deepest tunes this year. *Dirt Crew*

**Ghostland Observatory**

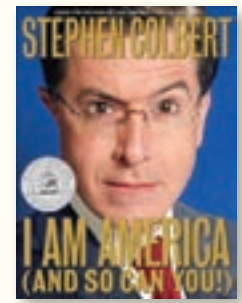
Ghostland's music is pretty much an amalgamation of all my favorite genres, past and present, rolled into one. That's what's up. *Dust La Rock, graphic designer*

**Digitalism**

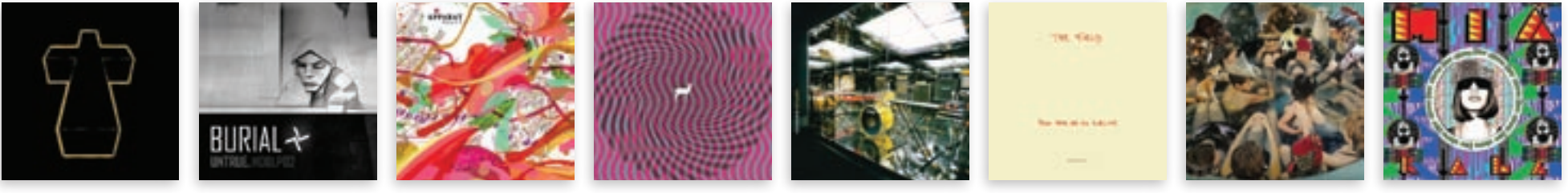
Just when everyone thought that the best thing this year was gonna come from France, these Germans surprised a bunch of people by pulling off a great album, with the new songs being as good as all the killer singles they had released so far. *Bruno Natal, XLR8R writer*



BEST MEDIA ITEM



**Stephen Colbert's I Am America (And So Can You)!**  
With the book beneath his belt and a satirical run for the White House underway, Colbert will transcend his status as America's foremost cultural satirist and become a powerhouse cultural movement unto himself. I predict he will get more write-in votes than half the 2008 candidates, and more people will have read his book than will have read their own Bill of Rights. *Scott Thill, XLR8R writer*



**Justice † (Vice/Ed Banger)**  
I really wanted to hate it. I really wanted to think the hype was just too much (which, by the way, it is) but the album is fucking great. The only way to make it better would be to permanently delete the Uffie track from their hard drive. *Jason Forrest, Cock Rock Disco*

It sounds beyond contrived at this point to even mention their name, but that record pretty much ran a train on everything else in music this year. *Mike Davis, Burlesque Design*

Enough bashing now. They are good. Fact is, they have just developed a very fresh and defining formula for club music without being cheesy, and that's not too easy. It's not their fault they're being copied all over the place. *Paul Beller, Ben Mono*

**M.I.A. Kala (Interscope)**  
I really enjoyed her first album and the second one expands further on this super-fun, super-smart mix of art, music, fashion and politics. Sonically solid, lyrically brash, and full of punchy beats, clever messages, and 11-year-old aborigine rappers—can't go wrong. *Gordon Hull, Surface to Air*

Digeridoos, rapping children, gunshots, and a blazing hot Sri Lankan ringmaster. Viva M.I.A.! *Derek Morris, Trophy Graphics*

I listened to this on repeat for three weeks. Once again, Dave Taylor reigns as king. *The Captain, Trouble & Bass*

My expectations were high for this one as I loved "Galang" so much, but she delivered once again. *Shaun Roberts, Fabric*

The beats on this are huge! *El Carnicero, Slit Jockey Records*

**The Field From Here We Go Sublime (Kompakt)**  
My favorite album of the year has my favorite track of the year, "Everyday." Such a beautiful and understated gem that is littered with small moments of brilliance. *Peter Berard, Domino*

After I heard this dude's remix of Gui Boratto's "Hera," I kinda flipped. Axel Wilner can be as dark and repetitive as OM, but can keep any stoney dude on the dancefloor. This is how techno needs to be. *Fred Miketa, XLR8R*

**Burial Untrue (Hyperdub)**  
In true Hyperdub style, Burial has produced an album awash with soundscapes haunted by ghosts and memories. Deeper, brighter, more vocal and even more ground-breaking

than his first album. *Georgina Cook, photographer*

The sound of the world ending in one explosion of pure bliss. *Tim Saputo, XLR8R*

**Battles Mirrored (Warp)**  
They are so good at making you think that they're all going in different directions, and the moment when all those noises cascade into a beautiful song it's sonic happiness. *Celeste Tabora, Modular*

**Panda Bear Person Pitch (Paw Tracks)**  
This album makes everything bad in the world disappear for the 30 minutes or so it goes for. It's more like a trance record with all the repetitive loops and harmonies. Completely hypnotic and beautiful. *Tim Hoey, Cut Copy*

**Apparat Walls (Shitkatapult)**  
Berlin's Apparat knows good production, writes good songs, and I have 10 tracks that I like from the album, which is quite rare. *Boys Noize*

**Deerhunter Cryptograms (Kranky)**  
I always expect a few things from Kranky releases: extended periods of noise, drones, and some schizo guitar work perhaps. This little gem takes all of that, adds some melody, and *voila!* They've just re-invented shoegaze. *Mikhail Bortnick, Mishka*

**Turf Talk West Coast Vaccine (The Cure) (Sick Wid It)**  
This album knocks! Fools outside of the Bay are sleeping, but this is some of the realest shit to drop in a long time. *Lydia Popovich, Quannum*

WORST ARTIST

**Kanye West**  
The tired ramblings of an inept trend chaser. What's next, a collaboration with Iggy Pop and walking the runway for Jeremy Scott? *Cameron Cook, XLR8R writer*



Kanye's megalomania finally became unbearable this year. Even his publicist's a dick. And after drunkenly dismissing Justice and Simian Mobile Disco at the European VMAs, he co-opted Daft Punk for his lead single. Don't front like you appreciate French house, dude. *Joe Colly, XLR8R writer*

**Panic At the Disco**  
They're the worst and I love their music so much. That's why they're the worst; it's a guilty pleasure. *Dorian Dumont, The Teenagers*

**Dan Deacon**  
That guy's a penis party. *Stephen Christian, Warp*

**Akon**  
He gives me the creeps. Plus, I think he's, like, 55. And has a zillion kids, Shawn Kemp-style. *Marah Eakin, Touch and Go*

**Amy Winehouse**  
It's tragic when your serial rehab visits, fugly tats, undead beehive 'do, and filthy ballerina slippers sing louder than your golden voice. *Cameron Macdonald, XLR8R writer*

**Juiceboxxx**  
As electronic musicians I have always joked that we should all just use iPods when we play live. I had no idea people actually did this on a mass scale. I saw Juiceboxxx with Bonde Do Role and all he had was a iPod nano plus a microphone. The first 15 minutes was the best thing I've seen all year, however the last 15 minutes was probably the worst I've seen all year. *Mochipet, Daly City Records*

**Vampire Weekend**  
Dude, I just really don't get this band. I'm sure there's worse out there, but when I hear it I think of people playing Paul Simon covers at your local college pub's open-mic night. *Celeste Tabora, Modular*

Top 5 Best Albums of 2007  
By Tobacco of  
Black Moth Super Rainbow



- 1. Aesop Rock None Shall Pass (Def Jux)**  
It's crazy how many music people let their record labels design their album covers, or choose which tracks will go on their records. Aesop is one of us who obsesses over every aspect of our music. I just found this out and it got me extra-excited about *None Shall Pass*. Plus, his stuff is insanely good but on MTV at the same time, so it's like this unfathomable mindwarp.
- 2. The Lava Children Demos EP**  
The five-song CD they gave me wins so hard. They live in California, and are the kind of band I'd want to be in. I like to think I'm the only person who has a copy of their music, so if anyone else ever hears them, they will have sold out to me.
- 3. Daniel Higgs Atomic Yggdrasil Tarot (Thrill Jockey)**  
This CD scared me to sleep all summer. I

don't know Daniel Higgs but he looks like someone I used to know and then know again now. If the album had lyrics, I'd want them to be gross but brilliant.

**4. Eluvium Copia (Temporary Residence)**  
*Copia* totally took me by surprise. I shouldn't like it at all, but it's really beautiful and something I'll probably always go back to.

**5. Flying Lotus Reset (Warp)**  
I'd like to train hard and have the chance to face this guy someday in the abstract-beats-producing championship. Until then, I'm gonna enjoy everything he puts out.

Black Moth Super Rainbow's *Dandelion Gum* (Graveface) is out now. [www.blackmothsuperrainbow.com](http://www.blackmothsuperrainbow.com)

# best single

- A. *The Bug*
- B. Peter Bjorn & John
- C. Dude N Nem

## Justice's "D.A.N.C.E." (Ed Banger)

If these Parisians' 30-second moment on MTV convinced Yankee teens that there are better sounds beyond Nickelback and My Chemical Romance, God bless them for it. *Cameron Macdonald, XLR8R writer*

## Peter Bjorn & John "Young Folks" (Almost Gold)

Sure, I'm sick of this song, too. But don't pretend you didn't love it before it was on TV commercials, everyone's mixtapes, and every other blog on the interweb. Great beat, plus Victoria Bergsman's sweet voice and happy whistling? This song is like the indie "Hey Ya!" *David Ma, XLR8R writer*

## Dude N Nem "Watch My Feet" (TVT)

The emerging juke sound has quite a few bangers bubbling up around Chicago, but this one is a true piece of pop genius. It's got the classic half-time/double-time, hip-hop/ghetto-house combination, and really fun party lyrics. *DJ C, Mashit*

## The Bug ft. Flowdan "Jah War" (Ninja Tune)

The Bug continues to pump out the toxic dancehall jams, and Flowdan is big on the mic! *El Carnicero, Slit Jockey*

## Gui Boratto "Beautiful Life" (Kompakt)

Even before the euphoric vocals kick in, people come up to ask what you are playing. The 12" of the year, such a happy, feel-good dance tune. *Peter Berard, Domino*

## Samim "Heater" (Get Physical)

It's the best way to get Germans dancing to *cumbia*. A very original and fun song, and way more interesting than all that minimal techno out there. *DJ Ulysses, Scatologics*

## Simian Mobile Disco "I Believe" (Wichita)

Incandescent. A moment of sincerity in a cynical and self-obsessed indie-dance scene. *Mosi Reeves, XLR8R writer*

## Durrry Goodz Axiom EP (Awkward)

Durrry is one of the most dynamic and talented rappers in the grime game, and some of the beats on this EP are stellar. *DJ C, Mashit*



## Biggest Inspirations of 2007 By Kime Buzzelli



### 1. Bat For Lashes' *Fur and Gold* (Echo)

Magical music for creating things. It's amazing to see singer Natasha Khan live—she's like a mystical gypsy with hypnotic stage presence.

### 2. Barry McGee installation at Redcat

A psychedelic kaleidoscope mind explosion, featuring a massive, layered assortment of his work covering every inch of the space.

### 3. *Beautiful Losers* movie

This Aaron Rose and Josh

Leonard film (a follow-up to the exhibition of the same name) will make you want to run out, buy art supplies, and do something. It might also make you jealous that you weren't a part of that scene.

### 4. Family

Located on Fairfax Avenue in Hollywood, this rad bookstore has the best assortment of eclectic zines, art books, films, and records. No Age, Miranda July, and Ariel Pink have performed there, and readings are organized by writer Trini Dalton. The

name really applies: The atmosphere and community is like good family vibes.

### 5. *The Burning House* at New Image Art Gallery

This incredible installation by Faile and Swoon transformed this West Hollywood space with paper cutouts and printed images that had been painted over. Inspirational and breathtaking.

Kime Buzzelli is an L.A.-based painter who also runs the boutique Showpony. [www.kimebuzzelli.com](http://www.kimebuzzelli.com)

## BEST GADGET



### Apple iPhone

Although it is incapable of cutting and pasting, it is still the sexiest little machine I have ever touched. *Celeste Tabora, Modular*

I'm like, hello? Finally it feels like the year 2000. The future is here. *Derek Morris, Trophy Graphics*



### 77 Boadrum, Brooklyn, NYC

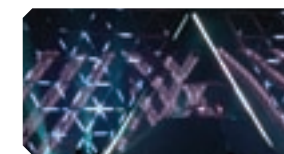
Japan's psych-noise vets, The Boredoms led a 77-drummer army in a Brooklyn park and performed one of the decade's most mesmerizing and blissful concerts. A fine antidote for jaded times when music is viewed as a cheap entertainment option. *Cameron Macdonald, XLR8R writer*

Missing the The Boredoms' 77 drummers thang in NYC was my biggest musical regret of this year. *Cameron Bird, Architecture in Helsinki*

### Daft Punk Live

It's hard to top the kings of 2007, even when they didn't release any music. *Sam Valenti IV, Ghostly*

Daft Punk live is like watching a Lite Brite mate with a Speak & Spell, with R2D2 calling all the shots. It was even better with the neon lights of Coney Island's Astroland in the background. *Leslie Hermelin, Mute*



An unproven internet rumor suggested that Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo and Thomas Bangalter didn't even turn up to their own shows, that their infamous robot masks concealed friends they were sending along in their place (to press play on a CD) instead. Regardless, their 2007 live shows (seen

by this writer at Harewood House, Leeds) were close to life-changing. Fantastic. *David Hemingway, XLR8R writer*

### Elevate Festival, Graz, Austria

This night is thrown in a four-level cave that goes deep into the pit of the earth via a glass elevator shaft. Each level had a couple different rooms with acts from Ed Banger to Ipecac. Number one crazy town! *Curses, Institubes*

### Paris Paris club, Paris, France

The Boombox Kitsuné party at Paris Paris was the best because so many girls came to our table to give us bottles of champagne. I kissed maybe 15 girls, and when I left the club

I saw Cory Kennedy so fucked up and Cobrasnake and Jeremy Scott were carrying her. *Bastien Lattanzio, photographer*

### Bar 25, Berlin, Germany

If you can imagine being in a carnival that's snowing thousands of kilos of confetti while Marie Antoinette is twirling about to ketamine disco for three days, you'll have a vague idea of how completely amazing their fourth birthday party in August was. Legendary. *Brian "C.L.A.W.S." Hock, Tigerbeat6*

### D. 77 Boadrum in NYC

*E. Daft Punk Live*



A. Agnes Montgomery  
B. Steven Harrington  
C. Gelitin



## BEST SHOE



Y3 Honja low!  
The best sneaker in 10 years.  
Very rare and soooo sexy!  
-Oliver Huntemann

## WORST MUSIC TREND

### Instructional hip-hop music

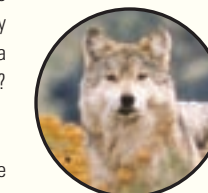
Any song that tells you how to do a dance while they're singing it is fun in the club but over all it's horrible! *Ron Upperman, Leroy Jenkins*

download the music in a crap quality months before the release, play it in the club (aaaahhh), and throw it away after a week. That really makes me start to think if the new generation appreciates music at all. *Boys Noize*

### Minimal techno

Could someone please explain what's so interesting about a style people listen to because their ketamine-damaged braincells are incapable of dealing with any more information than a straight-ahead kick drum? *Paul Beller, Ben Mono*

Too many bands with "wolf" or "wolves" in their name (other than Wolf Eyes). *Paul "Strategy" Dickow, Kranky*



Every DJ with a laptop and an internet connection having the exact same playlist. *Mike Davis, Burlesque Design*

### New Rave

Because it spawned a train of shitty bands and kids who pretended to be ravers "back in the day." At least it brought back the classic tunes into the clubs though... *Curses, Institubes*

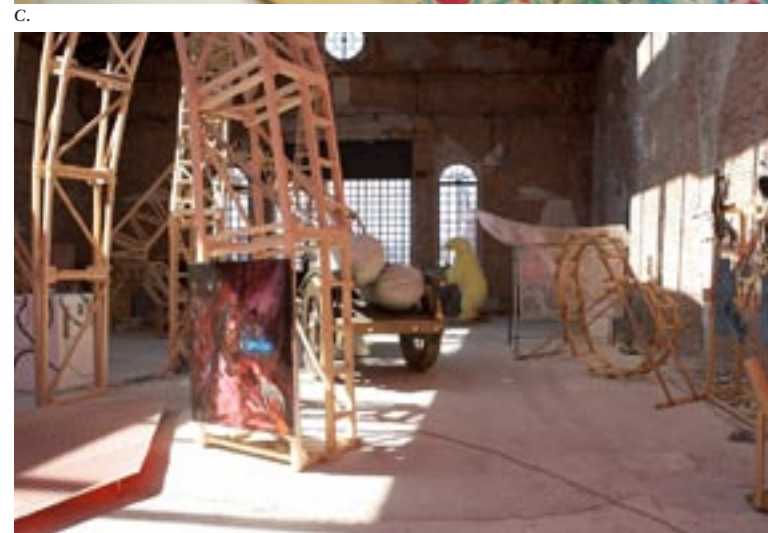
Club rap I can't think of anything worse than oversexed fashionista 20-somethings charging promoters \$2000 just so they can get on stage and lip-synch to their little MySpace hit. I don't want to name any offenders because I might have to interview them next year. *Mosi Reeves, XLR8R writer*



AutoTuning If you can't sing, try anyway. Do not hide behind technology or else you will hide behind it forever. I blame Daft Punk and Cher, but the underground and overground need to get off this shit. It kills a song dead like Raid. *Scott Thill, XLR8R writer*

### MP3 Blogs

It's a love/hate thing. Blogs do promotion for bands, but also for a lot of shitty music that gets the same attention. The blog is run by some 17-year-old kid who doesn't know anything about music and production, kids



### Gelitin

Really loving what Gelitin is doing! They are definitely crossing boundaries and getting all jiggy with it. Their pee-pee-sicle thing was totally gross in the most raddest way and that giant bunny was filled with lots of love. *Sam & Tury, Friends With You*

### Parra

Because he's even better when you get to know him. His sense of humor is reflected in his artwork. Very loose and clean. *Alvaro Iliarbe, Freegums*

### Akroee

Google his Montreal exhibition, *Hooked*, and see for yourself. *Teke Latex, TTC/Institubes*

### Pete Chung

He has designed for Supreme, Ubiq, Atmos, and has a new line coming out as an initiative to promote literacy called Book Club. He also raps, too. Maybe you have heard of him? Cool Calm Pete. *Ethan Holben, XLR8R*

### Cyprien Gaillard

It blows my mind that the rest of the art world hasn't figured out this kid is bananas. Ripping films from the

internet, smoking out landscapes, commenting on urban sprawl, gangs, human kinetic energy. Amazing. *Gordon Hull, Surface to Air*

### Kenya Hara

The man behind the branding and building of MUJI's identity. Everyone interested in communication through graphic design should read his book, *Designing Design*. *Gamall Awad, Demon Days*

### Steven Harrington of National Forest

This guy makes me step up my design game probably more so than anyone else right now. *Mike Davis, Burlesque Design*

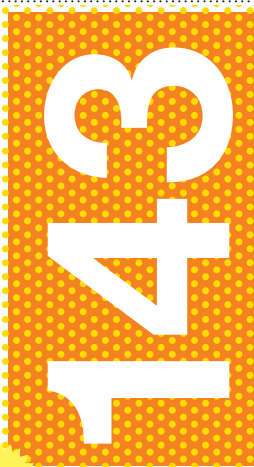
### Will Sweeney

He and Neck Face really haunted my eyes. *Pedro "Busy P" Winter, Ed Banger*

### Agnes Montgomery

The artwork on the recent batch of Panda Bear releases is amazing photo collages by Agnes Montgomery. It's breathtaking work that recalls childhood innocence, the beauty of nature, and the mystical nature of humankind. *Lewis, Ninja Tune*

## BEST COMEBACK: BEEPER CODE



best

## CLOTHING LABEL



### 10 Deep

Because Indian chiefs were, are, and will always be badass. *Josiah Hughes, XLR8R writer*

### Bounty Hunter

Punk's not dead! *Mikhail Bortnik, Mishka*

### Perks and Mini

Even though I can't afford any of it. *Dust La Rock, graphic designer*

### Supreme

The New York giant takes this one, but more so for their collaborations. *Luka & Myles, Of the Castle*

### Uniqlo

*Jed Koslow, Heavy.com*

## BEST MUSIC TREND

### Dubstep

I'm basically obsessed with anything Skream puts out and Benga's pretty damn awesome, too! I've been listening to strictly dubstep for past month straight, and I really don't think I see an end in sight. Together these



D.

guys are heavy hittazzz. *Joe Weber, Insound*

### Jumpstyle

It's the biggest new/old trend in the Netherlands, sort of like skipping rope without

the rope. The dance style is hated by everyone in the NL, but the reason why it's so cool is that gets at the prime core element of being a teen. It's stupid, a ton of fun, social, relatively easy to do, and your parents hate it. Plus, it's slowed/stripped-down gabber/hardstyle sound totally kicks ass on any soundsystem (even cell phones). Turns out everyone likes huge kick

drums after all. *Jason Forrest, Cock Rock Disco*



E.

### Squat parties

Thank goodness for promoters making use of the few squats and secret spaces

that we still have left in London, particularly in light of this year's smoking ban in the capital. *Georgina Cook, photographer*

### Radiohead

Allowing people to name the price they want to pay for their new album. That is genius. *Ethan Holben, XLR8R*

### The Return of Funk

From Amy Winehouse to Sharon Jones to a plethora of funk re-issues, funky drums and bass and great musicianship are back and making butts shake. *David Ma, XLR8R writer*

### Soca

Soca is the shit. It's so hype that you can't resist! I'm always including soca in my DJ sets. *Ghislain Poirier, Ninja Tune*

### 8-Bit Punk

If only I had kept my NES from when I was four, I could throw on a black hoodie and tour with Crystal Castles and Gameboy/Gamegirl and be a cool kid once more. *Cameron Cook, XLR8R writer*

### D. Benga

*E. A squat party in Brooklyn, NY*

# best style



**A. Back To Basics**  
Photo by Silke Labson



## Puritan Chic

Some Berlin-loving Scandinavians are going for a seriously Puritan look nowadays. When they walk through Berlin's Mitte district in couples they look like they are part of some orthodox movement, with the beards and 300 Euro Jesus sandals. *Sasha Perera, Jahcoozy*

I love all those people dressing like pilgrims. It's so good. *Charlie Salas-Humara, Panther*

## The '90s

Finally everybody got hooked on it. Colorz, colorz, colorz! Wayfarers! Washed-out jeans! I'm a '90s kid, so I like it. *Boys Noize*

## Neutral clothing with colors of this earth

Someone just told me they hate the color brown. How the fuck do you hate on the color brown? "My bad, I should have worn my hot-pink sweater and my acid washed 'hint of yellow' jeans to your barbecue. Damn!" *Prefuse 73, Warp*

## Mantyhose

It's not news that skinny jeans are back, but I'm talking about these next-level, skin-tight denim stockings that cut off a guy's circulation at the knees and ankle and leave nothing at all to the imagination. I can't decide if I love them or hate them. *Leslie Hermelin, Mute*

## The dick.

*Jamie Stewart, Xiu Xiu*

## Back to Basics

More refined and understated fabric choices with innovative cuts are making a huge push. I'm hoping the full-on Teddy boy look of pre-punk Britain will hit full swing soon. *Oliver Mak, Bodega*

## New Rave

Kids riding the fluo/nu-rave bandwagon, turning what used to be a cool classic-futuristic style into a parody of itself, looking like clowns in glasses without lenses and stupid faux bling. *Teki Latex, TTC/Institubes*

I just don't see the point. Fluo was bad back in the day and it's still bad today. *Ghislain Poirer, Ninja Tune*

## Skinny Jeans on Guys

Do we really need to see hipsters' ass crack from behind and the disturbing site of their nuts crammed in the front like squashed grapes? Guys, you need some blood flow in there. *Enrique Soissa, Paper Bag*

## Glow Sticks

Get over it people, they sucked the

first time around. *Brian "C.L.A.W.S." Hock, Tigerbeat6*

## The "Jesse James" Look

You know, bandanna around the neck, with huge plugs and aviators. *Tim Saputo, XLR8R*

## Crocs

All of a sudden they were everywhere. Who knew it would get worse than Birkenstocks? *Derek Morris, Trophy Graphics*

## Nike Vintage

Why did Nike get all Abercrombie on us and try to sell us pre-dogged-out shoes for \$80? *Mike Davis, Burlesque Design*

## Keffiyeh

Why in the fuck is everyone still wearing those Palestinian scarves?

# worst style



**B. New Rave**  
Photo by Gerard Estadella



*Cameron Bird, Architecture in Helsinki*

## Frilly and loose bohemian dresses on girls

Luckily for the overweight semi-chic girls of the world, they can now cover up their love handles and look fashionable. Unluckily for men, who knows what's going on underneath those big baggy sheets of fabric? *The Captain, Trouble & Bass*

## The Super Jesus Look

A beard and dirt doesn't make you God. *Gabriel Jaffe, Puma*

## New Era caps with the sticker left on.

*Gordon Hull, Surface to Air*

## Best Streetwear Brands By Steven Vogel



### 1. Visvim

I like the minimalist approach combined with high quality. They have taken the essence of streetwear to a new level.

### 2. Idiom

The perfect mix between high-quality snowboarding gear and design, it really doesn't get any

better. (Full disclosure: Vogel works for Burton, who owns Idiom.)

### 3. Garbstore

As far as amazing quality, concept, and wearability, Garbstore is amazing. I like their take on vintage English and American style with mod-

ern twists. Streetwear for grown-ups.

### 4. Pointer Footwear

My favorite independent sneaker company in the world—high-quality, quiet design, and comfort! Pointer's history is firmly rooted in the skate and street world, but they execute their

product in a way that makes you not look like a parrot.

### 5. Silas

Unfortunately, the European operation has ceased to exist but they're still strong in Japan. Silas is also streetwear that doesn't fall into the loud, bling-bling bullshit corner.

### 6. Tenderloin

Tenderloin is the original, and still one of the best Japanese labels. What others are copying now, Tenderloin has been doing for more than 10 years. Perfect for the skater that isn't into hip-hop (or at least the awful look propagated by whatever is on MTV), but into

bikes, heritage, functionality, and Americana.

### 7. Fuct

The original streetwear brand, it still has some of the best graphics, fit, and quality. No messing around.

### 8. UXA

The original NY skate crew that made it all happen on the East Coast, UXA combines extremely well-designed graphics with a history and story that hardly anyone can touch.

### 9. ANX

Another original NY brand, done

by Gio Estevez, who has more history in this world than most know.

### 10. Answer

Europe's best t-shirt brand by a long shot. Done by Will Bankhead, the formerly of Mo' Wax, and Emmet Keane of Park Walk fame, their prints are some of the best

in the world and the quality is unbeatable.

Steven Vogel is the Global Special Projects Manager at Burton and the author of *Streetwear: The Insider's Guide* (Chronicle Books). [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com)

## WORST ALBUM



### Soulja Boy *Tellem* (Collipark Music)

How the fark is this selling? Each track on this album sounds exactly the same—same tempo and cadence, just different words. *Lydia Popovich, Quannum*

### Justice † (Vice/Ed Banger)

A collection of previously released singles and mostly uninspiring new tracks that combined to create a disjointed and poorly flowing "album." Works if you didn't buy any of their EPs or singles, but otherwise this is just a collection of songs burned onto plastic, not an album proper. *Passions, Kitsuné*

### Underworld *Oblivion With Bells* (ATO)

It's *soo* bad! I don't know what they want to express with this bullshit. *Dirt Crew*



### Halo 3

*Guitar Hero*  
*Katamari Damacy*  
*Brickbreaker* on the Blackberry  
*Tetris*  
*Wii Sports*  
*BioShock*  
*Tony Hawk's Project 8*  
*Assassin's Creed*  
*John Woo Presents Stranglehold*

## BEST VIDEOGAME

## BEST RECORD LABEL

### Italians Do It Better

Italians Do It Better swept the floor with the asses of other dance-punk/post-disco labels, and with only two full-length releases: the *After Dark* comp and Chromatics' amazing *Night Drive (IV)*. Ken Taylor, XLR8R



Their label buzz is totally low-key and unassuming yet they've ended up releasing

a series of serious party removers on 12". *Enrique Soissa, Paper Bag*

What's better than a bunch of bands who ate shit for a bunch of years, bought a bunch of trippy Italo records, and then started killing it? Johnny Jewel is the new Phil Spector, but with eye shadow. *Fred Miketa, XLR8R*

### Soul Jazz

I buy everything they put out. They have the most killer archival collections and continue to invest in up-and-coming electronic artists. Who else can claim releases

as diverse as old-school U.K. jungle, first-wave post-punk, odd house experiments, '70s Brazilian pop, and future dub while continuing to release a series of compilations unearthing Studio One treasures? *Lewis, Ninja Tune*

### Stones Throw

A group of record nerds who are single-handedly influencing tastes with their weird, obscure releases.

A quality lineup—Madlib, PB Wolf, Dilla (RIP), Egon, Percee P, DOOM—with quality releases that are truly uncompromising. *David Ma, XLR8R writer*

### Compost & Compost Black

Still bringing the highest-quality A&R after all these years, plus great design and they're not afraid to bring new artists and collaborations to the world. *Luke McKeehan, NordicTrax*

### Freerange

Quality all the way. *Dirt Crew*

### Dial

There's much to cherish about the Dial imprint: the pallid, monochromatic sleeves that seem apposite to Lawrence's disembodied techno, Pantha du Prince's

monastic house, the barely concealed references to The Smiths. Also, it's got a sense of consistency and a definite aesthetic, both musically and graphically. *David Hemingway, XLR8R writer*



### Modular

Everyone worth their weight in white labels has spent the last 12 months shaking their

asses to New Young Pony Club, Muscles, "Hearts on Fire," and the like. I'm still waiting on a written apology for that Softlightes record, though. *Cameron Cook, XLR8R writer*

### Droid Recordings

Serious techno coming out of L.A.... WTF? I didn't know there was anything besides prog house or trance in L.A. These guys must be among the few who skipped getting castrated. *JPLS, Minus*

## music technology

A. Ableton Live 6  
B. Boss DD-6 Delay



### Ableton Live 6

Make a new banger in the airport, then pump out the jam in a club hours later. It's a traveling producer's wizard wand. *Curses, Institubes*



A.

I had my doubts about it, but Ableton has really made Live work as a sequencing and performance software. It's very customizable and easy to use. *Mochipet, Daly City Records*

Fuck, fuck, fuck Pro Tools. *Laurent Bardainne, Poni Hoax*

Ableton is so easy to make tracks with that it makes me weep tears of joy. Live performance possibilities are enormous when coupled with Triggerfinger or any of the MPC emulator pads. *Oliver Mak, Bodega*

### Serato Scratch Live

Serato is the bane of all serious DJs because of the preponderance of blog house DJs that can't mix, but I still think it's an excellent tool and it lives in my record bag right next to the always-necessary vinyl I take to gigs. *Blair Carswell, Music For Robots*

It still has yet to crash on me. *Kid Kameleon, XLR8R writer*

### The Yamaha QY100

My mini-band in a box. I'm writing my whole album on it. *Pigeon John, Quannum*

### Echoplex

We used this effect unit on nearly every song on our new record while

recording at DFA. Tom Verlaine from Television had one. Whenever anybody would ask "Hey, what does this song need?," I would always reply with "Tuned feedback through the Echoplex." "Right you are, Tim." *Tim Hoey, Cut Copy*



B.

### Boss DD-6 for Vocals

Instant three-part harmonies! *Charlie Salas-Humara, Panther*

### Spectrasonics Plug-ins

I've been very happy with the quality

of the Spectrasonics plug-ins. They all sound great and bring an unexpected natural feel to each song. *DJ Ulysses, Scatalogics*

### Acid

'Cause the name rocks and nobody except us is using it. I use it cause it's simple and it's just everything we need to compose songs. I don't know how people can make music on Logic—it's a different language to me. *Dorian Dumont, The Teenagers*

### Bias Peak Pro 5

Without Peak Pro (coupled with my iPod nano and Griffin iTalk recording device) for transcribing interviews, I basically wouldn't be able to do my job. *Ken Taylor, XLR8R*



## Best Reggae Artists of 2007 By Max Glazer of Federation Sound

### 1. Assassin

He still hasn't had a crossover hit, but Assassin has managed to establish himself as one of Jamaica's premiere lyricists. Hopefully American ears are just their usual two years behind the dancehall wave.

### 2. Mavado

The man named after the "Museum Watch" has dominated the dancehall scene like few others before him. It would be impossible to go to a reggae party right now and not hear at least a handful of tunes from this guy.

### 3. Bugle

The Daseca production team became the signature of a new wave in Jamaican music this year, and Bugle was the frontman for their most powerful productions. Instead of jumping on riddims with a million artists, Bugle has

been opting for single-song productions, resulting in big fucking hits!

### 4. Sean Paul

People always want to diss Sean for crossing over, but isn't the idea of being a recording artist to be successful? His stuff is realer than what any of his predecessors have pushed out into the worldwide market.

### 5. Baby Cham

While he never releases more than a couple of tunes in a year, Cham remains in the top ranking. In 2007, he did it big with "Conscience," a tune that is essentially a freestyle, not even a legit production.

Brooklyn DJ Max Glazer (Federation Sound) is one of America's finest dancehall selectors.  
[www.myspace.com/djmaxglazer](http://www.myspace.com/djmaxglazer)



### Justice

They're the only ones who can make you dance to music you would never normally listen to. *Dorian Dumont, The Teenagers*

### Brodinski

Because every time after a night of him mixing, my body hurts me so bad because I was dancing so hard. *Bastien Lattanzio, photographer*

### Karizma

He's redefining a DJ's job by taking it to the next level.

Ever seen a DJ turning Âme's "Rej" into a vocal house tune by just using two CD players and actually cutting the instrumental around the main synth phrase? *Paul Beller, Ben Mono*

### Chloé

We danced to her music in Munich and she told our singer to fuck off when he just wanted to say hello. She's cool. *Laurent Bardainne, Poni Hoax*

### Flosstradamus

I came across these guys' mash-up of Sigúr Ros and Twista on their MySpace page a couple years ago and was like "Heck, synth phrase? *Paul Beller, Ben Mono*" Since then they've obviously blown up, but I had the opportunity to see them at a Thunderdome party in Boston a while back and they completely rocked the crowd. Their mix of mash-ups, hip-hop, pop, and electro is right up my alley. *DJ C, Mashit*

**Top Albums of 2007**  
By *Baby Elephant*  
(Prince Paul & Don Newkirk)



**1. Amy Winehouse *Back to Black*** (Republic)  
A fresh throwback to '60s and '70s soul music. The lyrical content is juicy and the production is great. "Love is a Losing Game" and "He Can Only Hold Her" have that amazing Motown vibe. Can't wait to see what the future holds for Amy.

**2. Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings *100 Days, 100 Nights*** (Daptone)  
One listen and it's obvious why Mark Ronson tapped these dudes for the Amy Winehouse album. When I first heard this, I thought I was listening to a Nina Simone or Billie Holiday joint... but it was made this year!

**3. KRS-One *Hip-Hop Lives*** (Koch)  
An instant classic, with KRS-One and Marley Marl at their best. With the current state of hip-hop, this album may be overlooked as just two old-school guys getting together, when the new school could learn a lot about making albums from them.

**4. Bernie Worrell *Improvizscario*** (Godforsaken)  
This is very inspirational music, not spiritually but musically. There's a lot going on without being overcrowded, and it's a great collaboration of musicians that work well together. It's hard to believe these improvisational pieces flow so well. Easily the best jazz-type joint of the year.

**5. Rilo Kiley *Under the Blacklight*** (Warner Brothers)  
Rock, folk, country, backbeat, whatever. It's just a great blend of tones with great beats and solid melodies.

Baby Elephant's *Turn My Teeth Up!* (Godforsaken) is out now.  
[www.myspace.com/babyelephantmusic](http://www.myspace.com/babyelephantmusic)



A. *Flying Lotus*  
B. *Bad-ass BMX*



**Better USB Controllers**

This is the future for sure. Software has reached its peak, now we need knobs to twiddle. *Gamall Awad, Demon Days*

**BMX Bikes**

By next year, everyone's gonna be riding around on a BMX. They're gonna make it not fun to ride BMX for the kids that have been riding them since their youth, the same way they did skateboarding. *Ron Upperman, Leroy Jenkins*

**Indie Comedy**

With *Human Giant, Tim and Eric*

*Awesome Show Great Job!*, and *Flight of the Conchords* ruling the TV and pants-pissing albums from Patton Oswalt and Michael Showalter, 2007 has left us hungry for more anti-celebrity comedy. *Josiah Hughes, XLR8R writer*

**The Bug**

I'm really psyched about The Bug's new album. I heard many tracks and I can't wait to see the final tracklisting. The already released singles "Jah War" and "Skeng" are monstrous. *Ghislain Poirier, Ninja Tune*

**Flying Lotus**

The man overwhelms and soothes the

senses at the same time. I'm eagerly anticipating his second full-length. *Kid Kameleon, XLR8R writer*

**Baja pullovers and plaid.** *Vice Cooler, xBxRx*

**Longshot**

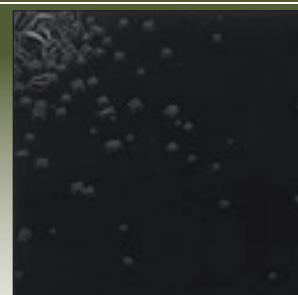
When not touring the country with Psalm One, this restless MC can be found dropping heated verses atop some of Chicago's best beats. After building his rep these past five years, "Shot's" forthcoming LP, *Addicted*, should let the world know just how serious he is about his craft. *Max Herman, XLR8R writer*

**The Return of Latin Freestyle**

All this party rap is awesome but without groups like Lisa Lisa & The Cult Jam, Seduction, and Exposé, these DJ kids in Ray-Bans and fingerless gloves would have no careers. Get ready to turn in them Bape hoodies and neon New Balances for a pair of Nike Cortez and a Raiders Starter jacket. *Lydia Popovich, Quannum*

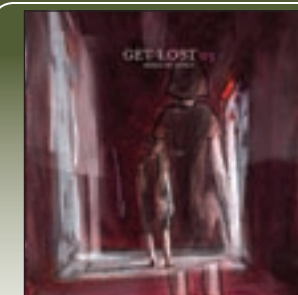


See more of your favorite artists' picks and pans for 2007 at [xlr8r.com/113extras](http://xlr8r.com/113extras).



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*EXPANSION | contraction* CD/2LP

Richie Hawtin's M\_nus imprint explores sound and silence with the release of *EXPANSION | contraction*, a stellar compilation that finds Plastikman, Marc Houle, JPLS and others expounding upon the title's two concepts. An elemental, enthralling minimal techno statement.



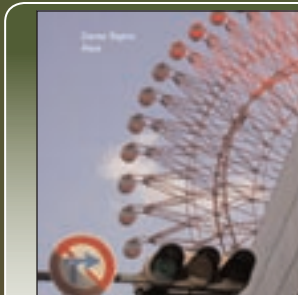
**DINKY**  
*Get Lost 03* CD

Concept, class, precision and originality seep from every track of this mix, the third in Crosstown Rebels' *Get Lost* series. Dinky, like fellow countryman Ricardo Villalobos, has forged a new direction in dance music, becoming one of the most popular female DJs while she's at it.



**SUPERSILENT**  
*8* CD

Supersilent celebrates ten years together with their first studio album in almost five. *8* is another otherworldly beast, a record that occupies the no-man's land between rock, electronica, jazz and modern composition. Heavy and dark music for heavy and dark times.



**DONNA REGINA**  
*More* CD

More is more on this, the duo's tenth release. "...for anyone into the basic qualities of the first *Lali Puna, Broadcast*, classic *Stereolab*, the Karaoke Kalk label in general, and even *Portishead*, but is ready and willing to get a whole lot more in the bargain." —Other Music



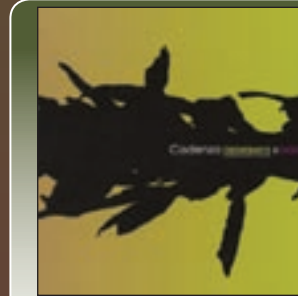
**LETTERS LETTERS**  
*Letters Letters* CD/LP

The debut album from this Montreal/Chicago trio led by veteran electronic music producer Mitchell Akiyama is a sleazy blend of no-wave pop, riot grrrr punk, analog electronics and psychedelic folk — just right for fans of Arthur Russell, Bikini Kill and *Whitey Album*-era Sonic Youth.



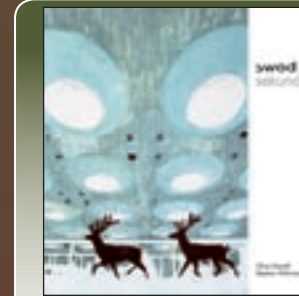
**DAVE CLARKE**  
*I Love Techno 2007* CD

Superstar DJ Dave Clarke brings it for 20 tracks of uncompromising techno to celebrate the annual Belgian "I Love Techno" festival. Featuring unreleased tracks by Kevin Saunderson, The Advent & DJ 3000, as well as fresh cuts by Joey Beltram and Vainqueur, this is forward-thinking dance music.



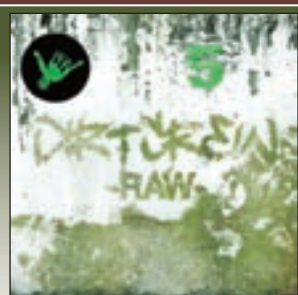
**LUCIANO**  
*Cadenza Contemporary 01 & Cadenza Classics* 2CD

With its first-ever CD release, Cadenza solidifies its place as maybe the minimal techno label. On disc one, superstar DJ and producer Luciano teases the essence of the label with a mix of their last six singles; while disc two presents unmixed highlights from the first six.



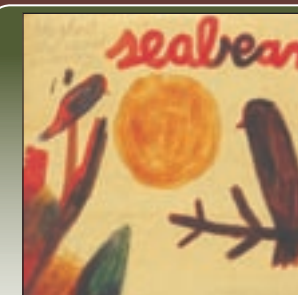
**SWOD**  
*Sekunden* CD/LP

The eagerly-awaited second full-length from this German duo is sure to satisfy Swod fanatics and convert some new ones. Elegant piano patterns and electronics are the foundation, but field recordings, bass, and subtle but funky drums round out these emotive, almost neoclassical compositions.



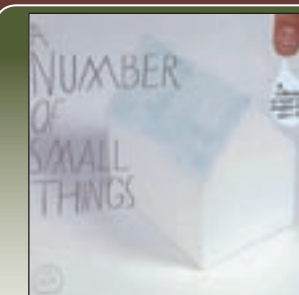
**DIRT CREW**  
*Raw* 2CD

This is the first album for Dirt Crew — house music stripped down to its barest form, with dark, heavy tracks ready to pound and pulverize the dancefloors. Bonus disc includes their remixes for M.A.N.D.Y., Jimpster, Marc Romboy and many others.



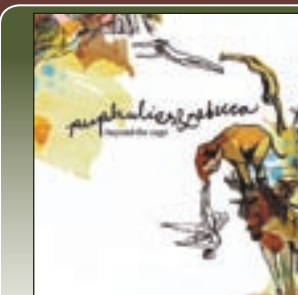
**SEABEAR**  
*The Ghost That Carried Us Away* CD/LP

As if the near-perfect, lo-fi, acoustic musings of 24 year-old Icelandic singer Sindri Már Sigfússon weren't enough, his debut also features musicians from Múm and Sigur Rós' live line-up. Glockenspiels, violins and lap steels usher Sigfússon's compositions toward chamber-pop sophistication, yet intimacy is never lost.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*A Number Of Small Things* 2CD

Nothing small about this double disc set. Compiling 7" tracks from Morr Music's sister label of the same name, *A Number of Small Things* is everything Morr stands for — blissful, forward-thinking pop. B. Fleischmann, Styrofoam and Lali Puna appear, alongside up-and-comers Butcher The Bar and Seavault.



**PUPKULIES + REBECCA**  
*Beyond The Cage* CD

Last year, the duo of Janosch Blaul and Rebecca Gropp released their debut *The Way We* to critical acclaim, but their latest, *Beyond The Cage*, promises to be the big hit, with its electronically pulsating chansons, equal parts minimal and soul.



# DIG THIS

DJ FOOD'S **STRICTLY KEV** AND SUPER FURRY ANIMALS' **GRUFF RHYS**  
ON THE HUNT FOR LOST PSYCHEDELIC TREASURES



WORDS: KEN TAYLOR  
PHOTOS: PAUL O'VALLE (GRUFF RHYS, OPPOSITE)  
PATRICIA NIVEN (STRICTLY KEV, THIS PAGE)

“What we’re helping to do is introduce music that’s always been there, and had a worth, to a new generation.”



In the last few years, lost psychedelic-era gems have popped up left and right due to the persistence and curiosity of vinyl enthusiasts and folks intent on unearthing dusty musical histories. Strictly Kev, of *Solid Steel's* crate-digging DJ Food crew, and Brit psych-rock advocate, Gruff Rhys, singer/guitarist of Welsh pop kings Super Furry Animals, have been integral to the phenomenon. Both have compiled and reissued old rock, folk, and soul records but for different reasons—Kev to introduce the far-out sounds to a new audience, and Gruff to uphold his cultural heritage. We got the pair on the phone to talk pop, politics, and preservation.

**XLR8R: What got you into record collecting?**

Strictly Kev: Hip-hop basically. I'm in my late 30s, so I'm from that era, but hip-hop made me search wider than the pop charts. And the whole breaks thing appealed to me: I quite liked the idea of making records out of other records. That's what got me into it primarily, but once you start traveling as a DJ, you never really stop picking [records] up.

Gruff Rhys: I don't come from a DJ background, so my collection is really random. I buy a lot of records, and have since I was a teenager, but I wouldn't say I'm a completist. When [Super Furry Animals] started touring as a band, we would use the gaps between sets as an excuse to play records. And everywhere we'd go, we'd look for interesting vinyl from whatever country we toured.

**Gruff, what process did you undertake when you went to compile *Welsh Rare Beat* for the Finders Keepers label?**

GR: With the first *Welsh Rare Beat* collection, I got an email from [label head] Andy Votel; he'd started getting his hands on Welsh-language records, and he didn't have a clue what they were about or didn't know anything about the acts. He asked for my help in explaining what was going on. [What he'd amassed] basically mirrored my parents' record collection. When I was a kid, I was taken to see these bands and I knew all the records, and I was completely blown away that people from outside Wales were into this music. I'd heard the odd rumor that Cash Money was playing [Welsh band] Y Tebot Piws singles—that hip-hop DJs were starting to buy up these records—and I got together with Andy Votel and Dom Thomas and we went through the records. I kind of vetoed some of the ones that I thought...had really dodgy lyrics, and suggested other artists they should look for. We're just about to release *Welsh Rare Beat 2*. We went to the BBC record vault in Cardiff and spent two days going through a mountain of old vinyl.

**So you're playing both compiler and translator, then?**

GR: Yeah, and maybe just helping explain the political context of the records. It was quite an exciting time musically and politically.

**What was going on there when these records were being released?**

GR: Well, the Welsh language had been suppressed for a few centuries, and in the '60s and '70s, I suppose all over the world, people were standing up for their rights to speak their native language. The pop scene mirrored the political scene.

**That brings me to my next question. Why, when we have so much music out there already, should we feel the need to go into music's tiniest corners to look for things that have already been released? Isn't that just feeding into the "I need everything now" mentality?**

GR: I think it's just revisionist history. We keep getting bombarded by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones as "the greats." You know, you can redefine women in pop and languages beyond English in pop. I think it's a useful thing to do, you know? I suppose for people like Andy Votel, who's come from a hip-hop background, when a band's record gets sampled by Madlib, or something [is sampled] from the *Welsh Rare Beat* compilation, I suppose it's creating new music in some kind of sense.

SK: The "adding to the pile" thing... I think some music has a time. It comes out in a time and it doesn't maybe fit [that era]. And it takes another generation to appreciate it for what it is. If it's good, it will always be appreciated at some point, but sometimes it's 10 or 20 or 30 years too early. I think what we're doing, or helping to do, is introduce music that's always been there, and had a worth, to a new generation. Or maybe there's an older generation that heard it the first time around that can present it to a newer generation, as with the *Sesame Street* [DJ Food sample] record or The Dragons [whose *BFI* album Kev just issued though Ninja Tune]. With The Dragons thing, it got passed around at the time and passed over by everybody, and so they sort of slung back into obscurity and did their own thing. Now there's a whole movement of surf rock and psych rock and all that very much coming back into vogue in the mainstream—it has been [happening] for years in the sampling and digging undercurrent. It's almost ripe for rediscovery.

**How did you go about reissuing The Dragons' record?**

SK: There was no record in the first place. There was a soundtrack with one track on it called "Food for My Soul" that I licensed for a *Solid Steel* mix in April on Ninja Tune. During the licensing process with Dennis

“We would use the gaps between sets as an excuse to play records.”





“I think it’s just revisionist history. We keep getting bombarded by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones as ‘the greats.’”

Dragon, the drummer from The Dragons, he said, “Hey, I’ve got this whole album that was recorded at the same time as ‘Food for My Soul,’ but we never got anywhere with it. Do you wanna hear it?” He forwarded me some MP3s and we just loved it to bits at Ninja, and got together a remastering budget ‘cuz it was all on quarter-inch tape; it’d sort of been hidden for years by the engineer.

**Gruff, what’s been your experience with finding the copyright holders?**

GR: With the first *Welsh Beat* compilation, that was all records from the Sain label—miraculously that label is still going and they’ve still got the master tapes. They’ve become a pretty mediocre label since then, but the first 10 years were pretty interesting... So it was incredibly easy. But with the second compilation, it’s music from a lot of different labels, and it’s frustrating to not be able to license key songs—either people demanding a lot of money or just being unable to trace the owners.

SK: I’ve had that similar problem with the *Solid Steel* mixes that I do. The first one, we got, I think, three quarters of what we wanted. It’s really frustrating because especially when you’re making a mix CD, everything is working together and if you just get one piece of the puzzle that’s not licensable, you almost have to scrap the rest, you know?

**Have you ever gotten to that point where you scrapped a mix?**

SK: It depends how much of a prime ingredient [a certain track] is. In a couple of cases, we’ve had to scrap bits, yes. I know Mr. Scruff is a real stickler for that. He will literally scrap 10-minute segments if he can’t get one track.

**Gruff, what’s drawing you away from the band and into the club sound with the new Neon Neon project with Boom Bip?**

GR: I’ve always had a magpie approach to music. It’s all music, you know? But I’ve come from a background of playing in bands, setting up equipment and playing live music... And a project like Neon Neon is more a kind of solitary record—just a couple of people working with a computer and making music. [Super Furry Animals] did quite a lot of tours with Boom Bip in the States. We asked him to remix one of our songs, and he did it in return for me doing vocals for a track on one of his records, and we ended up making an album for fun [Neon Neon’s forthcoming LP]. It’s like a rock opera

about the lives and wives of John DeLorean—the first playboy car manufacturer.

**SK: But weren’t SFA brought up on techno stuff anyway? You did a compilation of influential records and Joey Beltram was on there, along with some really out-of-the-ordinary techno records... Hardfloor and stuff like that.**

GR: We kind of bonded as a band during the electronic explosion in the early ‘90s. We used to go out to clubs and stay up ‘til the next day or whatever, and we started out taking our soundsystem around to parties. Somehow or other we ended up making techno records and also records of songs—conventional records. The band got signed and the soundsystem didn’t.

**So there is some truth to the rumored techno record of SFA’s past?**

GR: Well, Cian [Ciarán], who plays keyboards for us, releases records under the name Acid Casuals. He’s made records for Novamute and makes really hard, minimal techno mostly.

**You’re both big on collaborations. Do you see collaborating on cross-genre projects as a product of postmodern life, with artists tending to reject pure styles now in favor of cross-pollinations? Like, Kraftwerk never would have remixed The Eagles... That’s a relatively recent concept.**

SK: I think there are two different viewpoints. Kraftwerk remixing The Eagles wouldn’t happen because management wouldn’t allow it back then. They would think it would damage the bands’ respective careers. Kraftwerk wouldn’t work with Michael Jackson, as the legend goes. And nowadays [Kraftwerk] don’t have to do it ‘cause a kid in his bedroom can do [a remix]. Secondly, I don’t play an instrument, so in that sense I collaborate because otherwise I wouldn’t get the sound that I want.

GR: I think people tend to be more objective today and overlook that romantic idea of having to know your place and whatnot. They’re more open-minded in the 21st century.

**The Dragons *BFI* (Ninja Tune) and *Welsh Rare Beat 2* (Finders Keepers) are out now. Neon Neon’s full-length is expected early next year on Lex.**  
[www.myspace.com/strictlykev](http://www.myspace.com/strictlykev), [www.djfood.org](http://www.djfood.org),  
[www.myspace.com/neonx2](http://www.myspace.com/neonx2)

“When you’re making a mix CD, if you just get one piece of the puzzle that’s not licensable, you almost have to scrap the rest.”





# BUNJI JUMPS

SOCA WARRIOR **BUNJI GARLIN** CARRIES  
THE SOUND OF TRINIDAD ACROSS THE GLOBE.

WORDS: JESSE SERWER

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With all the sounds reverberating through Germany at any given time, soca might be the last musical form you'd expect to encounter in Deutschland.

After all, the tropical genre has almost exclusively been associated with Caribbean carnival season or, to a lesser degree, club nights attended by expatriates (primarily in the U.S., U.K., and Canada) from Anglophone Caribbean nations like Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Guyana.

But on one hot July evening, a Berlin recording studio was the latest frontier for the frenetic, relentlessly upbeat amalgamation of calypso, soul, African and East Indian rhythms—or at least a rough, rugged variation of it. In the midst of one of the more extensive tours ever undertaken by an artist from his native Trinidad and Tobago (soca's ground zero), Bunji Garlin has stopped in to the homebase of local soundsystem Supersonic, where he's recording a track over one of its new rhythms.

"This was really the first year that soca artists have come to places like Munich, Berlin, Hamburg," Garlin says during a break from the session. "A lot of places where we went, people had never seen or heard soca artists before. But now they know of it because of [Trinidad and Tobago's national soccer team] the Soca Warriors and the World Cup [in which, for the first time in the nation's history, T&T competed last year]. We're laying the groundwork and the doors are opening very, very wide."

To be fair, soca has broken through to the worldwide mainstream before, but it has mostly been in the form of novelty hits like David "Buster

Poindexter" Johansen's late '80s bar mitzvah banger "Hot Hot Hot" (a cover of a 1984 song by the Antiguan singer Arrow) and the Baha Men's jock jam "Who Let the Dogs Out." Jamaican singer/guitarist Byron Lee and his band, The Dragonaires, have also toured extensively with a repertoire that features, but is not limited to, soca, and soca artists Kevin Lyttle, Rupee, and Alison Hinds [see sidebar] have all scored hits with crossover tunes that impacted nations outside the Caribbean. Still, the genre—which was birthed in the early '70s when Trinidadian calypso performer Garfield "Lord Shorty" Blackman began speeding up calypso's tempo and incorporating influences from his island's large East Indian population—has had a far less significant impact on the world music market than its Jamaican cousin, reggae.

## WORLD CLASH

But while the Soca Twins, a pair of native-born German selectors who were in tow for much of Bunji's aforementioned European tour, have been spreading the soca gospel throughout the Rhineland and beyond, Garlin's mission is slightly different. A proponent of the sub-genre ragga-soca (soca with vocals that are chatted in a dancehall-like fashion), the 27-year-old toaster is known for outlandish stage costumes (recent Trinidad carnival performances have seen him appear in a kimono and phantom mask as well as full SWAT

team regalia) and his intention to shatter the barriers imposed by soca's hectic, patriotism-enhancing sound (the directive "Wave your flag" might be its most common lyric).

Take Garlin's two most notable singles this year, "Brrrt" and "Fire Fi Dem." Collected on his sixth album, *Global*, released in May, the two tracks take their cues from surf rock and techno, respectively—and most certainly bear little in common with calypso.

"Fire Fi Dem" rocks Danger Zone's Wipe Out rhythm, a reggae-fied interpretation of The Surfari's 1966 classic instrumental of the same name. "Brrrt," meanwhile, was recorded on Bobby Konders' March Out rhythm, a high-energy dancehall track that sounds a whole lot like Erick Morillo's club-cheese classic (as Reel 2 Real), "I Like to Move It."

"I thought his performance [on "Brrrt"] was sick," says Konders, who slipped Garlin the March Out rhythm when the two met in New York City last year. "I've seen his growth over the years and I know he has

that attacking deejay style, so I thought he would be perfect."

"Not everybody listens to techno music because of the speed—soca has the same situation, so immediately I recognized the position we in as a people," Garlin explains of his decision to work over tempos that deviate from soca's usual 150- BPM range in order to perpetuate the culture. "I was hoping to experience doing something [with] techno while I was [in Germany]," he continued, adding, "I have no fear of no type of music."

#### WORLDIN' OUT

While outsiders tend to perceive Trinidad as one big soca party, the opposite is actually true; a big reason why, Garlin explains, his palate is so broad. "When Carnival's done, all di radio stations in Trinidad switch to music from all over di world, and that's it for soca until next year. The other nine months we [soca artists are] all over di world."

Garlin's greatest innovation isn't necessarily his choice of rhythms, though.

He also brings weighty subject matter to a genre whose lyrical depth rarely goes beyond exhortations to jump around and, simply, party down. "Brrrt," whose chorus finds Garlin mimicking the sound of rapid-fire gunshots, sounds like one of dancehall's gunman tunes but, upon closer inspection, is actually an indictment of reckless gun-slitting. "Don't Waste the Water," a collaboration with Shurwayne Winchester originally released in 2005, uses a double entendre to stand for both sexual fulfillment and conservation advocacy.

"Not every country in the world has a Carnival; not everybody understands about jumping around with the flag and waving," Garlin said. "If you listen to the music that everyone else is listening to around the world, it has something they can live to. [Until now], soca wasn't really providing that—that's what held it back for many years."

*Global* is out now on VP Records.  
www.myspace.com/bunjigarlin, www.vprerecords.com

## SOCA GOLD

A look at the key players in the Caribbean's other music scene.



#### Kevin Lyttle

St. Vincent singer Kevin Lyttle's cavity-inducing "Turn Me On" had one of the longest lifespans of any single in recent memory: Recorded in 2001, it blew up in the Caribbean in 2002, hit Canada and the U.K. in 2003, and reached #4 on the U.S. pop charts in 2004. Like other soca tracks that have crossed over internationally, it was remixed into a form that is not immediately recognizable as soca.



#### Rupee

Former graphic designer Rupee scored a major international hit with 2004's pop radio-ready "Tempted to Touch." The handsome, U.K.-born Bajan—basically, the Sean Paul of Barbados—could more recently be heard crooning on "The Game of Love and Unity," the official theme to the 2007 Cricket World Cup, alongside Shaggy and Faye-Ann Lyons (Bunji Garlin's wife).



#### Machel Montano

While he's yet to score a U.S. hit on the order of a "Tempted to Touch," Montano who first emerged at age eight, in 1982, with "Too Young to Soca"—is considered soca's biggest star, and sold out Madison Square Garden earlier this year. Claiming to be the first human being to go "high definition," he re-dubbed his band, Xtatic, "Machel Montano HD" for his most recent LP, *The Book of Angels*, released in February.



#### Alison Hinds

Like Rupee, Hinds hails from Barbados but was born in the U.K.; on the scene since 1986, she is often referred to as the "Queen of Soca," a title further cemented by her most recent album, November's *Soca Queen* (on the 1720 label). She is possibly best known for her 2005 girl-power anthem "Roll It Gyal," the Caribbean's answer to Destiny's Child's "Independent Women."



dirtybird

DIRTYBIRDRECORDS.COM

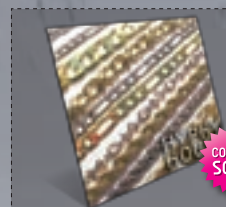
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OUT NOW

#### Style of Eye – The Big Kazoo EP

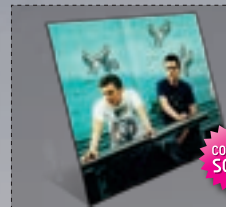
Sweden's Style of Eye gets down with a very special track for dirtybird. Picture an army of 1000 Kazoo players tripping you out over sick beats. Longtime house favorite on labels like Classic, Style of Eye has completely flipped his style and become one of the illest new tech funk producers on the planet.



COMING SOON

#### Hyphy House CD/2LP

This is Claude VonStroke, Christian Martin, Worthy and Justin Martin together under one banner. Inspired by the West Coast hip-hop sound called "hyphy" that was started in the Bay Area, the 4 San Francisco based producers take the sound and warp it into their version of the lowest, most basic elements. It's almost like minimal booty bass and no one has ever heard anything like it!!



COMING SOON

#### Catz 'n Dogz CD/LP

After their big dirtybird hit "Fixation", your favorite Polish team Catz 'n Dogz (a.k.a. 3 Channels) team up for a full length album. They are masters of mixing modern technology with the fun house of the old days that used to make you smile and dance your ass off. Expect some serious dance-floor killers on this outing.

Dirtybird and Mothership are now available via Beatport and iTunes!

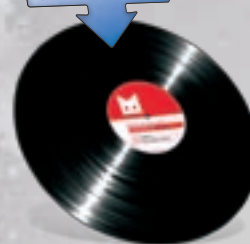
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mothership

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OUT NOW

#### Todd Bodine – Secret Edge EP

Sick slice of tech-funk that combines the best of techno into one tune. A shuffling, pulsing dancefloor grower. B-Side "Back to Back" is a slow-bubbling underwater thumper that works well both early and late.



COMING SOON

#### Voodeux CD/LP

The creepiest duo since Bella Lugosi and Boris Karloff, "Voodeux" is Boston's own Tanner Ross and KiloWatts. They create a moody, almost scary version of deep techno that will get under your skin and shake your soul. Supported by everyone from Tiefschwarz to Anja Schneider, this is guaranteed to be a killer full length.



# BIRD IS THE WORD

AS HIS ALTER EGO **CLAUDE VONSTROKE**, BARCLAY CRENSHAW PUTS CHIRPS, CHIMPS, AND HUMOR BACK INTO HOUSE MUSIC.

WORDS: ANNA BALKRISHNA  
PHOTOS: MORGAN HOWLAND

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It was May in San Francisco, and another dirtybird party was underway in the misty sunshine of Golden Gate Park. Then, amidst the hoodies and barbecue grills, the Bird emerged: a dancing, six-foot cross tall between a beer-soaked chicken hawk and a malevolent blue jay. “Oh my gawd, that’s totally Claude VonStroke!” squealed a girl as she raced towards the blue-costumed interloper.

Nearby the real dirtybird, Barclay Crenshaw, went unnoticed as he dropped his new edit of “Who’s Afraid of Detroit?,” the record that made him an international (if unrecognizable) house superstar, in the mix.

#### TOTALLY STROKED

When you operate with a name like a transcontinental porn star’s, cases of mistaken identity are bound to happen, and Crenshaw’s Claude VonStroke moniker has lent an air of subterfuge to his productions from the start. Conceived as a goof amongst friends trying to come up with the biggest, fakest-sounding DJ name humanly possible—runners up included Pedro de la Fedro and Burnto Bertalucci—the Claude VonStroke alias stuck, and has since tripped up even Pete Tong, who stuck his foot in the guano when he breezily greeted Crenshaw as “Claude” during an interview on BBC Radio One last year. “Nobody in America thinks it’s my real name,” laughs Crenshaw. “But in Europe, some people think it’s totally feasible. I guess they assume I might be Dutch or something.”

Like any good story about self-invention and mistaken identity, the birth of Claude VonStroke is a Cinderella tale at heart. Four years ago, Claude VonStroke didn’t exist—in his place was simply Barclay Crenshaw, a film major who’d done time at Paramount Pictures in L.A. before burning out and heading up to the Bay Area. In San Francisco, Crenshaw edited corporate videos by day, and by night made drum & bass mixes that failed to get him DJ gigs. The glass

slipper came in the form of a pet project called *Intellect*. For reasons inexplicable even to him, Crenshaw began filming a massive compendium of interviews with big-name artists—Derrick May, Derrick Carter, Orbital, Swayzak—in 2002, creating a step-by-step career playbook for aspiring DJs: how did they get famous, get their first gigs, release records? When the documentary finally wrapped years later, he had quit his day job and run through most of his money—he’d also gleaned every backdoor trick he needed to run his own label.

#### LIGHT AS A FEATHER, STIFF AS A BOARD

Dirtybird Records started out, as most new labels do, with modest pressings of friends’ stuff; in this case, a couple singles by Justin Martin and Sammy D, featuring the farty synth stabs and ridiculous samples (barnyard noises, fake Southern rapping) that the guys loved from old Green Velvet and ghetto-tech records. Then came the ingeniously simple “Deep Throat,” dirtybird’s third release and Claude VonStroke’s debut. Before then, Crenshaw had fooled around with hip-hop productions and “crazy Chemical Brothers-type stuff” (plus an embarrassing trance loop for a Sony commercial), but “Deep Throat,” underpinned with a creepy recording of his raspy voice, was the first time he had ever sat down to write a house track. Astonishingly, the record ended up selling 11,000 copies—almost unheard of for a debut release on a fledgling label, never mind a first studio attempt.



"I GUESS THEY ASSUME I MIGHT BE DUTCH OR SOMETHING."

Nobody was more shocked than Crenshaw.

"That was my first track, so I don't know why it took off like it did!" he says with a bemused shrug. "Everything was coming together then: the label's funny name, our sound. The big thing was that DJs from different genres were picking it up; Richie Hawtin would play it out for the minimal techno crowd, but then Jesse Rose would also play it at house nights. It appealed to everyone, kind of the way everybody loves a classic song like 'Percolator.'"

**NOT SO FUNNY**

As a preteen coming of age in suburban Detroit, Crenshaw was obsessed with Cajmere's iconic 1992 rave-up, and its blueprint can certainly be felt on Claude VonStroke's 2006 full-length, *Beware of the Bird*, which melds zig-zagging funky house with the staccato tension of techno and the digitized raunch of booty bass. The album also takes cues from "Percolator"'s prankster attitude, laced with funny sound bites—from monkey shrieks in "Chimps" to his own cartoonish warble and now-famous "Ung!" in "The Whistler." All of this—along with a cover shot of dirtybird's maniacal mascot holding a cop at gunpoint—added up to the label's profile as house music's equivalent of a bachelor-pad foosball table.

Crenshaw seems a little perplexed by the goofball tag. "I just want my music to create a certain energy," he muses. "But that doesn't always mean a jokey energy—it's just that those

are the records that become popular!" Actually, *Beware of the Bird*'s biggest blow-up, "Who's Afraid of Detroit?," is one of Crenshaw's darkest efforts. With its shuffling percussion and hypnotic, undulating melody line, the moody paean to Crenshaw's youth became clubland's most ubiquitous track last year, finding its way onto high-profile mixes by Tiefschwarz and M.A.N.D.Y., and getting reworked by everyone from Kevin Saunderson to Stanton Warriors.

The widespread attention even brought a few unlikely suitors; namely, The Rapture, who came calling for a remix of their discofied hit "Whooh! Alright. Yeah...Uh Huh!"—on MySpace, no less. "Matt from the band messaged me, but I just thought it was another random MySpace thing, so I ignored it," recalls Crenshaw. "Then I mentioned it to somebody and they said, 'The Rapture? They're famous!' I don't really listen to dance rock, so I had no idea who they were. Oops."

**EVERYBODY WANG CHUNG TONIGHT**

This month, Claude VonStroke releases "Groundhog Day" with labelmate Christian Martin; he's been so busy doing remixes, that this is his first original track to hit shelves in a year. Crenshaw vows to free up time for his own full-length project in 2008. "The way I do a remix, it's like making a whole new track, so there's really no point," he says.


Until his sophomore album drops, fans can occupy themselves with his September

installment of Resist's *At the Controls* mix series, as well as a re-released special edition of *Beware of the Bird* on London's Fabric label. The latter—a double CD that pairs the original album with a collection of re-rubs from Audion, DJ Assault, and others—is one of the rare instances in which Fabric has ever embarked on a joint release with another label.

But the project that most excites Crenshaw may be his riskiest: a new label that will take him far beyond freaky house. Mothership retains a deep techno focus that'll be less intense than dirtybird's "blow up everything like The A-Team" sound. The label released its first record in July, a spooky, spacey slab by London-based minimalists Italoboyz. And Crenshaw, in a nod to his old hometown, has decided to donate a portion of Mothership's profits to the Detroit Youth Foundation, which teaches underprivileged kids how to make electronic music.

For Crenshaw, it's just the next phase in the maturation of that Falstaffian character, Claude VonStroke. "I like to make the silly, funky stuff, but I like to go dark, too. We have a phrase around here: 'Are you Wang Chung or are you John Wayne?' No, I'm not going to explain what it means! But I will say that both labels can be both characters at different times."

[www.dirtybirdrecords.com](http://www.dirtybirdrecords.com)

 Claude VonStroke talks about his latest tracks at [xl8r.com/113extras](http://xl8r.com/113extras).

**RIDIN' DIRTY**  
Claude VonStroke handpicks  
the year's highs and lows.

**1. Best label of 2007 that gets overlooked because it's not in Germany**

Leftroom

**2. Best label of 2007 that deserves all the hype it gets**

Moon Harbour

**3. Worst sound of 2007**

The tired bass sound used in almost every big-room "electro-house" track.

**4. Biggest misconception of 2007**

That big room "electro-house" is good music and that dirtybird is an electro-house label. Don't make me pull out a knife and stab you, fool!

**5. Best city to play in 2007**

Dublin, Ireland

**6. Best producer of 2007 no one knows about yet because he totally flipped his sound.**

Style of Eye

**7. Best track of 2007 to dance to with my one-year-old**

"Lipgloss" by Lil' Mama

**8. Most underrated and disrespected music software of 2007**

Propellerheads' Reason

**9. Worst trend of 2007**

UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) is now more popular than WWF (Worldwide Wrestling Federation). People are now getting their asses beat on TV for real.

**10. Best trend of 2007**

Producers are now more respected than rappers and singers.



# THEN *and* NOW

A LOOK AT THE STYLES THAT  
WERE REBORN IN 2007, AND THEIR  
ORIGINAL INCARNATIONS.

B&W PHOTOS: Dirt  
COLOR PHOTOS & DIGITAL IMAGING:  
Christopher Woodcock  
STYLING: Brette Howard

SPECIAL THANKS: Zak Segura and Painted Bird,  
San Francisco ([www.paintedbird.org](http://www.paintedbird.org))  
B&W SHOT ON LOCATION IN SAN FRANCISCO:  
(in order of appearance) The Mission, the Sunset  
Party in Golden Gate Park, the S.F. Botanical Garden,  
the Embarcadero





**ROCK 'N' ROLL FOR LIFE**

*(Previous Spread)*

Handlebars: Roky Erickson concert t-shirt, jeans by Diesel, sneakers by Etnies, 1974 400/4-speed Trans Am by Pontiac.

Cherri: Alice Cooper concert t-shirt, jeans by Levi's, moccasins by Minnetonka, portable iPod speakers by iHome.

**ROCK 'N' ROLL IN '07**

Omar: T-shirt from Urban Outfitters, jeans by Bongo, model's own vintage leather vest, bandanna, and boots.

Michaela: Jeans by Jordache, model's own sweater and jacket, accessories from Painted Bird.





*RAVE FOR LIFE*

M: Op-art dress by Ameba, capri pants by Adidas, shoes by Keen, furry pink hat by Bunnywarez.

Jovino: Model's own sweatshirt, pants by Skillerz Work Wear, furry leg warmers by Bunnywarez, sneakers by Keen, viking hat by Bunnywarez. ([www.bunnywarez.com](http://www.bunnywarez.com))

*RAVE IN '07*

Sara: Jumper by Peggy Noland, accessories from Painted Bird, Zanzibar sneakers by Etnies Plus.

Jesse: Icon hoodie by WESC, Skelter III denim pants by Emerica, sneakers by JB Classics, Entrung belt by Emerica, headphones by WESC.





*GOTH FOR LIFE*

Margo: Model's own blouse, vintage velvet vest, skirt, and leggings, cameo from Necromance (L.A.), shoes by Frederick's of Hollywood.

*GOTH IN '07*

Meghan: Shirt and necklace from Painted Bird, skirt by H&M, model's own boots.





**BIKES FOR LIFE**

Mary: Model's own sweater and hat, pants by Dickies, bike shoes by Sidi, messenger bag by Freight Baggage.

Fergus: Model's own shirt, leggings, and shorts, gloves from Walgreen's, bike shoes by Sidi, backpack by Freight Baggage.

**BIKES IN '07**

Ryan: Deep Cover hoodie by Obey, model's own Bart Simpson tank, Prohibit Slim pants by Emerica, Sly Mid sneakers by Etnies Plus, NY hat by New Era Cap, scarf from Painted Bird, lock by Kryptonite, Blogger bag by Timbuk2.

Lindsay: Sweatshirt and belt from Painted Bird, shorts by Levi's, model's own tights, shoes, and necklace, hip pack by Freight Baggage.





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# Insound

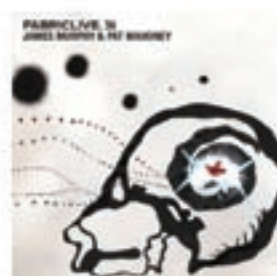
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**BOYS NOIZE**  
Oi Oi Oi  
With his highly anticipated Last Gang/Turbo debut, Boys Noize delivers fourteen banging new Electro/Techno/Funk tracks that own the dancefloor.

LAST GANG / TURBO RECORDINGS



**FABRICLIVE 36**  
James Murphy and Pat Mahoney  
James Murphy and Pat Mahoney delve into their New York roots for Fabriclive 36, a hot sweaty blend of seminal disco, deep rare grooves and edgy tech-infused funk.

FABRIC



**HOLY FUCK**  
LP  
Holy Fuck is a lo-fi improvisational electronic band from Toronto, using live instrumentation and non-instruments to achieve electronic-sounding effects without the use of laptops or programmed backing tracks. Holy shit this rocks!

YOUNG TURKS / XL RECORDINGS



**DROP THE LIME**  
Sky City Rising  
Drop The Lime's newest is a conceptual vision based around his love for dub and the new dubstep sounds. It ties into a video he is finishing to accompany this half-hour EP.

BROOKLYN BEATS



**GRIZZLY BEAR**  
Friend EP  
Get a free limited Grizzly Bear lithograph when you order!  
New collection of material features 10 tracks of new, reworked & re-recorded songs, covers, and collaborations.

WARP



**BLACK DICE**  
Load Blown  
Load Blown is the fourth album by Brooklyn's Black Dice. The beats drip and roll, tar-pit voices sing into an oil can, and the guitars crank like calliope.

PAW TRACKS



**DAFT PUNK**  
Alive 2007  
Alive 2007 is the audio documentation to the most talked about live tour in recent years. Recorded at the Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy, an 18,000 capacity sports arena in Paris, on June 14th, 2007.

VIRGIN



**MUSCLES**  
GUNS BABES LEMONADE  
The one man phenomenon Muscles makes some serious noise. His sound is built around keyboards, synths packaged full of extraordinary party anthems, explosive vocal harmonies, rigid techno, lo-fi house and soft trance.

MODULAR

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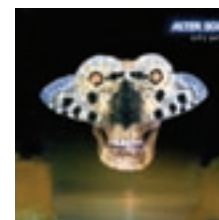


## Alter Ego

**GERMAN SYNTH-AND-DRUM-MACHINE MASTERS ALTER EGO PROVIDE A CRASH COURSE ON WHERE ELECTRO-TECH HAS BEEN AND WHERE IT'S GOING.**

**THE KINGS OF ELECTRO: COMPILED AND MIXED BY PLAYGROUP AND ALTER EGO**  
Rapster/US/2xCD

**ALTER EGO WHY NOT?!**  
Klang Elektronik/GER/CD



Alter Ego—Roman Flügel and Jörn Elling Wuttke—has pretty much dominated peak-time underground-techno worldwide since releasing “Betty Ford” in 2000. Their latest full-length, *Why Not?!*, reaffirms their status as kings (and court jesters) of maximalist 4/4 anthems that slam hard and weird. Ten of the disc’s 11 tracks are pure DJ dynamite, so expect Alter Ego’s dancefloor reign to continue full ear-bleed ahead.

The title cut establishes *Why Not?!*’s brain-banking bravado, as a rigid, rugged groove plows through a panoply of unhinged video-arcade sound effects. Madness ensues. “Gary” lifts the so-dumb-it’s-genius beat from the Glitter Band’s 1973 hit “Do You Wanna Touch Me? (Oh Yeah!),” which is the perfect chunky foundation for Alter Ego’s brown-sound bass blurge and asteroid-belt analog-synth flashes. “Fuckingham Palace” hints at these pranksters’ irreverence with sonics: Imagine Si Begg’s or Luke Vibert’s blubbery-bassed whimsy and flagrant freq-outs unsuccessfully reined in by German techno’s efficiency.

Flügel and Wuttke have done extensive research on creating the ultimate demented sounds to induce maximum eye-rolling ecstasy (and hip-shaking madness) in chemically enhanced clubbers. You sense that these guys have perma-grins plastered on their mugs every flamboyant minute they’re at the controls. They’ve achieved the rare feat of making music that inspires laughter as much as it does bumping and grinding, music that’s as goofy as it is disturbing.

The duo’s selections on the double-disc mix *The Kings of Electro* isn’t as madcap as *Why Not?!*, and it’s not even really “proper” electro as most aficionados would consider it. Alter Ego supposedly provides an overview of electro’s “present,” but many of their choices aren’t new and they lean more toward underground techno, with a heavy Detroit emphasis. This is no bad thing, of course, but Plastikman’s “Kriket,” Robert Hood’s “Minus,” Psyche’s “Neurotic Behaviour,” Dan

# Album Reviews

## 12.07

Bell’s “Baby Judy,” and Maurizio’s “M4” have only tenuous connections to the genre spawned by Kraftwerk’s “Numbers” and Herbie Hancock’s “Rockit.” Closer in style to common notions of electro are Detroit Grand Pubahs’ “Big Onion (Joakim Remix)” (sparse, bloopy, ass-fixated electro-funk) and Dopplereffekt’s “Cellular Phone” (next-level, cold-chillin’ robotic funk that’s as stark and forbidding as Detroit’s Eastside ghettos). So Alter Ego’s version of *Kings of Electro* is a misnomer, but not a misfire.

The 19 tracks on Playgroup’s disc touch on typical electro and its stylistic deviations, striking a nice balance between inventiveness and party-igniting. The history lesson presented by Playgroup (British producer Trevor Jackson, boss of the defunct Output Recordings) hews much closer to the consensus of what electro was/is. He starts with Chris & Cosey’s chilly Teutonic throb and melodic grandeur (“This Is Me”) before taking a 180-degree turn into Just Ice’s lean, hard hip-hop that, amazingly, carries Autechre’s DNA in it. Jackson unearths obscure gems (Just Ice’s “Turbocharged,” Tilt’s self-explanatory “Arkade Funk,” Energize’s minimal, spooky “Report to the Dancefloor,” High Fidelity 3’s “B-Boys Breakdance [Dub]”) and resurrects expected genre standards (Hashim’s “Al-Naafiysh”; Model 500’s “No UFO’s,” which now sounds surprisingly hokey; Ryuichi Sakamoto’s awesome “Riot in Lagos”).

If there’s one unforgettable lesson to be learned from Playgroup’s side of *The Kings of Electro*, it’s that most ‘80s drum sounds suck: they’re clunky and of chintzy timbre, like tapping pencils on wax paper. Despite this drawback, electro undeniably signified a gleaming, if brittle, future for music—and, even in its obsolescence, it can still move bodies 25 years later. *Dave Segal*



## Jennifer Johns

Photo by Jamie Beaman

### JENNIFER JOHNS PAINTING ON WAX

Nayo-Hiero Imperium/US/CD

Many R&B divas start their albums with mellow mood-setters. Not Jennifer Johns. She opens up *Painting on Wax* in full-on blaze mode, kicking old-school lyrical ballistics, segueing into sexy, sung harmonies, then topping it off with some dancehall business. That's the first indication that the Oakland-born artist is different, but not the last. A collage of hyphy collabos, reggae- and world-inspired cuts, hip-hop love songs, poetic sensuality, and a torchy ballad or two, *Painting on Wax* covers a wide stylistic range. Guests Kaz Kyzah, Zion, Dun Dun, and Gift of Gab barely counterbalance Johns' strong, confident presence, which goes from seductive to saucy to "slow down, ma, you killin' 'em" in about 0.2 seconds. Forget Jenny from the block; make room for JJ from the Town. *Eric K. Arnold*



### AMS UNO ANIMATED STAGNATION

CommonWealth/US/CD

Rhode Island isn't exactly a hip-hop hotbed, but it still managed to spawn trio ClokWorx, rapper Ams Uno's crew. Uno aims to be one of hip-hop's prophets, but he does best when he's least self-conscious about that goal. On "Uno Potato," for example, with a deft twisting of nursery rhymes, Uno's slightly nasal flow makes his point playfully. In contrast, the reggae-inflected "Soul Contribution" wears its ambition too nakedly. Still, Uno shows a range that even some seasoned MCs never develop, from the spare, quick-moving "Standing in the Reign" to "The Uninvited," with a percussion break that mirrors his crazed lyrics. Maybe Rhode Island deserves a spot on the hip-hop map after all. *Luciana Lopez*

### BASTEROID UPSETS DUCKS

Areal/GER/CD

Rumor has it that Germany's Sebastian Riedl (a.k.a. Basteroid) ruffled a few feathers of Upper Austria's duck population during the production of his trace-fueled Areal debut, *Upsets Ducks*. Apparently, the beaked ones weren't down with flocking to the beat of Riedl's ground-shattering mash of appegiated grooves, broken kicks, and pulsating robotic rhythms. After years spent unleashing remixes and singles, Riedl's hunger for minimal techno, grimy electro-house, and trance saturates this album. From disco percussion and filth-flushed synths ("Attention: Upsets Ducks") to acid-splattered modulation ("Jacktales") and funk-ed-out escapades ("Backstage Ass"), *Upsets Ducks* is an enterprising display of a sound colagist lost within his own beat factory. *Chris Sabbath*

### BIM SHERMAN TRIBULATION: DOWN IN JAMDOWN 1974 TO 1979

Pressure Sounds/UK/CD

Silky-voiced roots crooner Bim Sherman is best known for his '80s offerings with Adrian Sherwood's On-U Sound, which endeared him to punk, new wave, and progressive dub fans. His buttery falsetto isn't as recognizable to reggae aficionados outside the U.K., which is a shame. Pressure Sounds aims to correct this oversight with *Tribulation*, a 23-track collection of Sherman's Jamaican recordings, which rightfully places Bim alongside Gregory Isaacs and Dennis Brown as a classic reggae stylist, equally competent at sufferers' anthems and lovers' rock. Stellar versions of "Love Forever," "Ital West," and "Golden Locks" are just some of the highlights on this contender for roots reissue of the year. *Eric K. Arnold*

### BURNT FRIEDMAN FIRST NIGHT FOREVER

Nonplace/GER/CD

Berlin's Burnt Friedman is more an abstract sculptor than musician. Throughout his 14-year recording career, the former performance- and video artist has used musical projects like Nu Dub Players and Flanger as platforms for bold, oblique, and meticulously constructed sound. Where instrumentals ruled previous works, vocals are at the forefront of his fourth album, *First Night Forever*. Alternately folky, proggy, and soulful, *Forever* finds Friedman retuning his spacious, jazzy post-rock dub inclinations to suit a host of unique singers. The Björk-ish Belgian vocalist Barbara Panther freaks her folk flag on the riveting "Machine in the Ghost" while Steve Spacek mines his lonely soul on "Walk With Me." Friedman's latest three-dimensional sound form inspires repeated examination. *Tomas Palermo*

### CELEBRATION THE MODERN TRJBE

4AD/US/CD

"They say the world has just begun to tame the savage heart of man," sings Celebration frontwoman Katrina Ford on the latest disc from her Baltimore-based post-punk group. It's a line that could just as easily refer to the trio's music—a remarkably ferocious beast on 2004's self-titled breakthrough, but a moody, almost sophisticated dialogue between force and poise on *The Modern Tribe*. Reveling in this duplicity (check the unpredictable "Wild Cats" or the dizzying "Pony"), the band smartly plays to the strong suits of the tempestuous Ford, whose voice leaps from coo to caterwaul with grace and frightening force, making for one of the most beautifully urgent and unabashedly raw albums of the year. *Robbie Mackey*

### COUGHEE BROTHAZ WAITIN' OUR TURN

Coughee Brothaz Ent/US/CD

There's a name for all the scoundrels and scalawags who turn up on Devin the Dude's tales of debauchery: the Coughee Brothaz. "Coughee," of course, is Devin-speak for that green sticky stuff, and *Waitin' Our Turn* has all sorts of fun (see "Coughee in My Cup") with the play on words. Predictably, the whole thing doesn't play much differently than any of Devin's recent solo albums and that's sort of the point. When they're not having fun with faux Cockney accents ("Rise and Shine"), Brothaz like Tony Mac, Manchild, and Juggmugg are talking strictly pussy, pot, and penis jokes (the rest of the album). What, you were expecting something else? *Jesse Serwer*

### CUNNINLYNGUISTS DIRTY ACRES

A Piece of Strange-Bad Taste/US/CD

Since 2001, the CunninLynguists have been redefining the sound of Southern hip-hop. With their fourth LP, this trio, consisting of MCs Deacon the Villain and Natti along with producer-on-the-mic Kno, further smoothes out its sonics with laid-back, bumping beats accompanied by gritty, grown-man reflections. Kno's lush sample- and synth-infused productions provide consistency throughout this disc, but it's the raps of Deacon and Natti that keep listeners anticipating what's to come. These Kentucky denizens can both buck police brutality ("Gun") and talk about checking for top-shelf chicks ("Wonderful") while sounding like they mean every word. *Dirty Acres* is what honest hip-hop sounds like, delivered from Southerners treading just far enough under of the mainstream radar. *Max Herman*

### EDIT CERTIFIED AIR RAID MATERIAL

Alpha Pup/US/CD

On what's sure to be one of the best party albums of the year, the friendly face of L.A.'s Glitch Mob, Edward "edIT" Ma, crashes the party, pulls the fire alarm, passes out champagne, and lights a cherry bomb in the toilet. He actually shakes off much of the "glitch" from his 2004 Planet Mu debut in favor of good-times crunk, complete with rabble-rousers The Grouch, Busdriver, TTC, Abstract Rude, and D-Styles. Some of the album feels like heavily stuttered dancehall ("Straight Heat"), some of it rocks hard (check the solo on "Crunk de Gaulle"), and the "Artsy Remix" is still funny after a dozen listens. edIT is a deadly charmer whose album withstands repeated partying. *Matt Earp*

### EFTERKLANG PARADES

Leaf/UK/CD

Efterklang (Danish for "reverberation") released one of 2004's most gorgeous experimental/post-rock albums, *Tripper*, and has been baiting fans with EPs and mini-releases ever since. At the band's simplest, it's predictably, Scandinavian-ly spooky (like Múm singing about ghost ships), and at its best and most complex, like a light-filled prism. Few ensembles can make orchestral and electronic arrangements sound so natural together. *Parades* makes good on Efterklang's sparkly promise by showcasing that prowess while moving forward in style. Its scale is grander and its vocals more campfire-like, which won't please everyone. But there are one-minute, and even 30-second, stretches on songs like "Illuminant" that are their own complete musical worlds, and are better than many bands' whole albums. *Rachel Shimp*

### FELIX DA HOUSECAT VIRGO BLAKTRO & THE MOVIE DISCO

Nettwerk/US/CD

Chicago don Felix da Housecat has always grasped the fantasy of clubs and club music. His 2002 album, *Kittenz and Thee Glitz*, soundtracked a Berlin/Studio 54-style fantasy, and he's kept that same dirty, electronic-disco feel here, though he also draws on soul and funk masters like Prince and Parliament and contemporaries like Daft Punk for a sound that's simultaneously retro and modern—and sexy (the lead single is, after all, entitled "Something 4 Porno"). The tracks work well enough individually, but this is definitely an album, a coherent statement that progresses from song to song, despite the occasional misstep (the tedious "Radio"). Now someone just needs to make the movie to match the music. *Luciana Lopez*

### FUNCKARMA REFURBISHED TWO

n5MD/US/CD

The Funcken brothers get caught up in a few post-techno habits, but all is forgiven in this remix collection. The Dutchmen's remixes usually place number-crunched hip-hop rhythms in synth textures that stroll through a moonless alleyway. Their execution is awfully relaxed, but an odd tension still seeps into the mix, namely on their reworking of Celine's "Here and Now." The Funckens' clearest fingerprint is a choppy rhythm that flickers in an eyeblink cadence as best heard in the fractal, aquatic funk of Machine Drum's "Machinebong." They also inject rich morphine into the cliché of stapling music-box lullabies onto jagged beats on the Spyyweirdos' "The Key." *Refurbished* is a worthy reason for the bedroom-IDM set to keep the faith. *Cameron Macdonald*

### G&D THE MESSAGE UNI VERSA

Look/US/CD

The queen of experimental soul (Georgia Anne Muldrow) and the king of stoner soul (Dudley Perkins) are practically conjoined twins. And with this 20-track acid trip, they've decided to publicly consummate their funkdefied union (away from their erstwhile label Stones Throw, oddly enough). Surprisingly, most of the cuts here (produced largely by Muldrow) don't come off as esoteric as their makers' personas might suggest. Shining moments come on tracks like "Poppa's Song" and "Stronger," where Muldrow croons solo, sans the Ol' Dirty Bastard-esque ramblings of Perkins. Pushing boundaries while subverting preconceived notions of black music may be a difficult task for some, but G&D appear to be up for the challenge. *Rico "Superbizzee" Washington*

### HELIOCENTRICS OUT THERE

Stones Throw/US/CD

The Heliocentrics are not back-to-basics hypocrites from the 21st century. Lead drummer Malcolm Catto and his seven comrades in funk have the approval of everyone from DJ Shadow to Madlib, who employed their skills for *The Outsider* and Yesterday's New Quintet respectively. And for good reason: Their collaborative fusion has created an instrumental hybrid of wonders. Equal parts jazz, electronic, funk, and more, *Out There* is a collision of sonic signatures and smoking jams you'd want to hear on your way to Jupiter. From the cardiac-attack chill of "Joyride" to the skewed snares of "Sirius B" and onward into the aural freak-out of "Falling to Earth," The Heliocentrics' debut disc is space-tracking defined. *Scott Thill*

### LOPAZZ KOOK KOOK

Get Physical/GER/CD

Stefan Eichinger runs multimedia label 800achtspur, has scored films, and even remixed the *Miami Vice* theme. To suggest his debut album for Get Physical is actually *kooky* would be stretching it, but there's an intriguing playfulness to tracks like "2 Fast 4 U" and "We Are." Nevertheless, the wonky funk of *Kook Kook* is cut through with an odd melancholy. The techno nostalgia of "The Old Days"—in which an unidentified voice recalls "Sometimes I miss those old machines with the big tubes in them.../ The whole business is different nowadays"—is most overtly downcast, but even the invite to "share my rhythm" (on the track of the same name) sounds oddly subdued. Lovely stuff. *David Hemingway*

### MESTIZO DREAM STATE

Galapagos4/US/CD

Mestizo first established his musical career in Chicago, but as his new album proves, this Bay Area native (now in L.A.) is all about the Cali state of mind. Produced entirely by S.F.'s Julian Code (Sean Julian and DJ Morse Code), *Dream State* radiates West Coast appeal with its chill, SP12-born beats and Mestizo's stream-of-consciousness raps about life in the Golden State. "Solid Gold" is especially compelling as he offers quick snapshots of his past, like being jumped into a gang and spending entire days freestyling in East Oakland ciphers. When this MC further develops his narratives, on "Rosie," for example, they're somewhat solemn but no less stimulating. This ode to California just may be Mestizo's best work yet. *Max Herman*

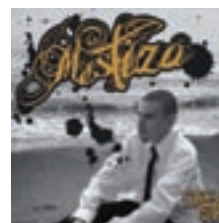


## Pylon

### PYLON GYRATE PLUS

DFA/US/CD

Pylon was one of America's great post-punk bands, but unless you're an Athens, Georgia die-hard, you've probably never heard of them. Hailing from the same scene that fostered The B-52's and R.E.M., Pylon's dance-punk jangle was almost *too* prescient for the early '80s—their sound never cleanly fit into college-radio prime-time or punk rock's rank-and-file. As such, albums like 1980's *Gyrate* were forgotten gems until now. Re-released through DFA Recordings as *Gyrate Plus*, much of Pylon's best material is collected here, with songs like "Dub" and "Stop It" shifting through the band's minimal drum-and-bass pulse while singer Vanessa Hay sneers over the whole thing. It's relentless but incredibly catchy, which begs the question: How did this band manage to slip through the cracks for so long? *Brandon Ivers*





**MF GRIMM**  
**THE HUNT FOR THE GINGERBREAD MAN**  
Class A/US/CD

As a former financier and partner-in-rhyme to MF Doom, and founder of Day by Day Entertainment (Mudville, Count Bass D), Grimm knows his latest solo effort comes with some pretty high expectations. So a concept album that features the MC spitting murderous tales from the perspective of a gun-toting, real-life gingerbread man seems more laughable than laudable. Rife with confectionary references ("Half Baked") and nursery-rhyme interpretations ("The Fox," "My House") over tepid beats, the album plays like a stale batch of underground demos from the mid-'90s. Although Grimm attempts to create a sinister, ominous caricature parallel to that of Doom's, with admittedly clever wordplay, this cookie unfortunately crumbles harder than Master P's failed "Cookie Money" comeback. *Rico "Superbizzee" Washington*



**MURCOF**  
**COSMOS**  
Leaf/UK/CD

For *Cosmos*, Fernando "Murcof" Corona composed a symphony for space travel, and its loneliness and hallucinated illusions. The Mexican experimental vet focuses on the stars, using his usual craft of digitally sculpted orchestral sounds and drones. But it's the deep spaces of silence between every note that make him remarkable. Corona's orchestral work ranges from Romanticist flourishes to melodramatic dirges that recall straight-to-video science fiction. The delicate piano interplay of "Cometa" is fine jazz for the spheres, and "Cielo" builds a sharp tension in its duel between a sputtering rhythm and string melody that swoops down like vultures. At its best, *Cosmos* evokes the melancholy of passing extraordinary sights in an otherwise muted galaxy. *Cameron Macdonald*



**OCDJ**  
**HOORAY**  
Wildfire/Wildfire/US/CD

It's easy to be enamored with the Wham City arts collective. Seemingly free from all societal constraints, the Baltimore sect tends to garner as much press for its ethos as it does for the quality of its members' art. The debut release from beat-maestro OCDJ (a.k.a. Dan Gaeta) may change that. *Hooray's* zealous, 8-bit approach to crunk and B-more club is as endearing as it is club-friendly. Sure there's camp here (a remix of Kelis' "Milkshake" is retitled "Guess What! [Ice Cream!]"), but for the most part, OCDJ's quirky, melody-driven reworks of iconic Three 6 Mafia and Lil Jon tracks put the majority of Diplo remixes to shame. Guns, bitches, and bling just went to art school. *Ross Holland*

**OHMEGA WATTS**  
**WATTS HAPPENING**  
Ubiquity/US/CD

Omega Watts makes the kind of progressive, next-level hip-hop usually associated with London or Paris. Actually, the Portland-based producer/MC hails from the same borough as Biggie Smalls, but his style is truly outernational. Old-school influences (think Mos Def's "Universal Magnet") drench his otherwise futuristic, entirely revolutionary impulses in b-boy juice. "I ignite change with a stroke of my pen," he rhymes, yet he also does it musically, with some of the phattest, most vibrantly soulful beats heard in quite a while. Whether flipping funky flavors with R&B legend Sugar Pie DeSanto or enlisting Brazilian vocalist Tita Lima for a tropical throw-down, Omega gives you plenty of reasons to turn him up even louder. Thoroughly enjoyable. *Eric K. Arnold*

**PERCEE P**  
**PERSEVERANCE**  
Stones Throw/US/CD

Percee P hails from one of NYC's toughest housing projects, hard as it may be to conceive from the slight Southern drawl he sports. After a handful of one-off singles and two decades of dues paid, Percee's debut full-length finally arrives chockfull of choppy head-nod beats and guest appearances (Chali 2na, Aesop Rock, Diamond D, Prince Po, Guilty Simpson). With beatsmith and labelmate Madlib on the MPC, Percee slices through 19 cuts of raw fire with the voracity of a thirsty new jack with something to prove (or an old head with kids to feed). All non-believers, check the lung-collapsing flow of "Throwback Rap Attack." *Rico "Superbizzee" Washington*

**PHOTEK**  
**FORM & FUNCTION 2**  
Sanctuary/UK/CD

Nine years after drum & bass producer Rupert Parkes' first compilation of unreleased tracks follows its sequel, which caves to internet trainspotters by making the dubs of late-'90s jungle edits "One Nation" and "Saturated Hip Hop" available. Good thing, because along with the DJ Die & Clipse remix of the classic Full Cycle track "Thunder," and Robert Owens' elegantly vocalized "Things," they're the best of a can't-help-but-seem-dated decade overview. The militaristic aggression on "Deadly Technology" is too heavy-handed for all but the fanatical, and "Industry of Noise" sounds like a cross between Pendulum and Nine Inch Nails. But there's one bone for those still pissed that '97 couldn't last 'til infinity: TeeBee's remix of "Ni Ten Ichi Ryu." *Rachel Shimp*

**ROAM THE HELLO CLOUDS**  
**NEAR MISSES**  
~scape/GER/CD

More jazz, less laptop... and make it dark. That's the credo for the latest release from ~scape. Navigating the grey waters between freeform jazz and abstract minimalism, this Australian trio takes fusion into the lightless depths where few have gone before. The Miles-inspired horns of "Pretender's Hand" flow like silk one instant, and evoke languid desolation on tracks like "Death and Possible Dreams" the next, as percussionist Laurence Pike (Triosk) brings just the right level of snap or sizzle. Understated yet ever-present are the facile electronic manipulations emanating from Dave Miller's computer, complementing each Bohemian sonic stream with some superbly unnatural processing. *Near Misses* is sad yet sublime, like metal flowers rusting in the rain. *Doug Morton*

**ROB SONIC**  
**SABOTAGE GIGANTE**  
Def Jux/US/CD

Another smartass triple-threat (rapping, producing, not sucking) from Def Jux, another slam-dunk for independent-minded hip-hop. Rob Sonic's troubled-teen back-story puts him in good company with that label's standouts like Aesop Rock and Cage, but his sneering, shotgun delivery hits harder, especially on the knockout "Brand New Vandals" and "Ready Aim Shoot." And like the incredible El-P, Rob Sonic's War-on-Terrorized lyricism is much needed, especially on tracks like "A Cold Cold War (I Loathed the 80s)" and "Rock the Convoy." If we had more hip-hop heads like him, the cultural crossover wouldn't suck so much ass. It would suck brains, right through the ears. *Scott Thill*

**SONGS OF GREEN PHEASANT**  
**GYLLYNG STREET**  
FatCat/UK/CD

Reveling in isolation—rather than rejecting it—the music of Duncan Sumpner, or Songs of Green Pheasant, has always exhibited a stark beauty. On *Gylling Street*, a reference to an old address, the reclusive British avant-garde folkie has widened the scope of his compositions, further fusing folk's gorgeous harmonies and melancholy undertones with the ethereal qualities of dream pop. Horns or crisp, reverb-soaked guitar lines, delicately placed across the album's seven songs, often pierce through the smoky haze of Sumpner's homespun vocals. Touches of church bells and a children's choir only add to the record's beautiful, haunting sense of nostalgia. *Patrick Sisson*

**THE OSCILLATION**  
**OUT OF PHASE**  
DC Recordings/UK/CD

For better or worse, Demian Castellanos' predominantly instrumental project, The Oscillation, is hard to quantify, and therein breeds the madness. On *Out of Phase*, Castellanos undulates jelly-drunk around several fairly recognizable stylistic touchstones, but before you can decide whether to shriek "Happy Mondays!" or "Jesus & Mary Chain!," he's flitted away with a dub-happy flick of an effects pedal. It makes for a neat bit of Madchester-sounding head trippery, but to what end? For all Castellanos' obvious self-assuredness with his various instruments, it's hard to say if he has a clear trajectory in mind. *Anna Balkrishna*

**THE QUANTIC SOUL ORCHESTRA**  
**TROPIDELICO**  
Tru Thoughts/UK/CD

As Quantic, Brit DJ and producer Will Holland has already made his love of funk and soul clear. But with the Quantic Soul Orchestra that love comes through clearer still. The group, an all-live, no-sample project, has a big-band sound, with bright, brassy horns layered over conga-filled percussion breaks. Funk is the driving force, but there's hip-hop (guest J-Live's flow over "She Said What?"), soul (Noelle Scaggs singing over "Lead Us to the End"), and plenty of Latin touches (like the *cumbia* rhythm of "San Sebastian Strut") as well. Most of the cuts here are instrumental, with an emphasis on grooves that cut to the bone. What's not to love? *Luciana Lopez*

**TWO LONE SWORDSMEN**  
**WRONG MEETING II**  
RotTERS Golf Club/UK/CD

Andy Weatherall has harbored an eccentric obsession with rockabilly for years now—it showed up in spades on Two Lone Swordsman's *From the Double Gone Chapel*. But on *Wrong Meeting II*, Weatherall and fellow Swordsman Keith Tenniswood (a.k.a. Radioactive Man) make their gothic electro-billy sound work better than ever. On tracks such as "Blue Flame," TLS slide their legs over the saddle of an 808, crunching their guitar sounds and spitting venom through a bullet mic. Even when not overtly playing the black-leather card, *Wrong Meeting II* is seedy and whiskey-soaked, wallowing in a new kind of cyberpunk biker rock. This is sticky, nasty, man-in-black rock music for the tech-heavy dystopia set: Wallow and rejoice. *Justin Hopper*

**WHITE WILLIAMS**  
**SMOKE**  
Tigerbeat6/US/CD

Joe Williams' music is fit for a sports bar and a student co-op basement party, and he rocks that odd duality on *Smoke*. The smooth-rock opener, "Headlines," treads half-drunk through a swimming pool, but is catchy enough to advertise steakhouses on TV. Williams revives glam sleaze on "In the Club" and his amusing cover of "I Want Candy," in which he mopes while using a pub's urinal. He also has a sharp ear for groove, as shown on the Neu-meets-Bowie excursion "New Violence" and the title track's contorted P-funk. *Smoke* curiously ends in discord where a Game Boy melody screeches in "Lice in the Rainbow." Nonetheless, Williams is off to a healthy start (just avoid viewing one of the decade's tackiest album covers). *Cameron Macdonald*



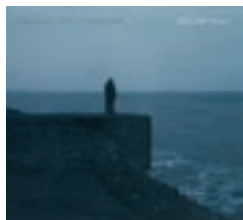
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**YEA BIG & KID STATIC**  
**YEA BIG & KID STATIC**  
Jib Door/US/CD

Oddball beat wizard Yea Big and animated rhymers Kid Static both call leftfield home in Chicago's varied hip-hop scene, making their recent pairing so proper. While Yea Big's 2006 solo debut was too disjointed for most heads, his productions here jump out of the speakers with the perfect pulse for Static's fat lip-esque delivery. Withstanding the warped chaos of the instrumental "Low Budget Battle Scene," Yea Big proves to have a firm grasp on that old boom-bap, as heard on the punchy "Speak the Facts." And to Static's credit, he sounds equally inspired by the offbeat productions, like the glitchy "The Life Here." Thanks to these two, Chicago just got a whole lot more to boast about. *Max Herman*

**YEASAYER**  
**ALL HOUR CYMBALS**  
We Are Free/US/CD

It was inevitable; during a beer break, the garage bands started actually looking around the garage, and over in the corner were dad's Peter Gabriel-era Genesis records, big brother's Tortoise records, and Animal Collective's sampler. Having mastered "feeling," the bands started exploring "technique," and the result, at least in the case of Yeasayer, is like Fleetwood Mac and 4Hero sitting around a campfire, harmonizing over a hash pipe. That's right, you've got prog rock (and just about everything else) in your chocolate. These 11 tracks play tag through a reverberant boarding school bathed in flushes of light and swept by solar winds. Yeasayer are no longer punks, but they still may wanna blurt, "Folk you!" *Tony Ware*



**Blockhead**

**BLOCKHEAD**  
**UNCLE TONY'S COLORING BOOK**  
BH/US/CD

Blockhead knows how to bounce—he even has a song called "NYC Bounce" to prove it. But that tune is less a telegraph than a template, as the producer's first self-released effort is full of tracks that digitally swing and sway rather than boom and bap. Juicy entries like "Do the Tron," "The Strain," and "Grape Nuts and Chalk Sauce" feature phat MacBook beats for sure, but lack the hard-hitting drums that he delivered on his last effort, *Downtown Science*. There's more glory for distorted guitar solos, especially on "Duke of Hazzard" and the aforementioned "NYC Bounce," a twist that strangely skews Blockhead's soundtracking into Moby territory. But his ear for rump-shaking anthems is as tight as ever, which is why rappers are clamoring to work with him. *Scott Thill*



**Ticklah**

**TICKLAH**  
**TICKLAH VS. AXELROD**  
Easy Star/US/CD

In any musical movement, there's bound to be a handful of individuals who act as an unseen driving force—the navigators who set the musical sextant and guide the ship. As America's rekindled love for organic funkiness has grown, Victor "Ticklah" Axelrod has led those sounds, from the mid-'90s heyday of Stubborn Records to Easy Star's *Dub Side of the Moon*. But on *Vs.*—a battle in dub reggae against his own perfectionism and self-doubt—Ticklah provides a graffito-that-should-be: "Dub's Not Dead." With deeply funky yet subtle dubs, full of the elusive qualities that keep fans returning to Keith Hudson or King Tubby, Ticklah warps reggae, ska, Latin, and African material with a wealth of musical history and new ideas. This is strong but accessible music that could please the pot-leaf T-shirt crowd and proper enthusiasts alike. Utterly brilliant. *Justin Hopper*





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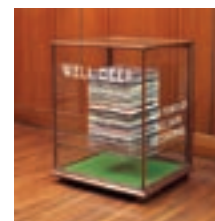
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**THE NINJA TUNE SUB-LABEL CELEBRATES A DECADE OF ITS OWN SURREALIST ART-MAKING.**

**WELL DEEP: TEN YEARS OF BIG DADA RECORDINGS**  
Big Dada/UK/2CD-DVD

*Well Deep: Ten Years of Big Dada Recordings*, an extremely tight-packed double-disc-plus-DVD compilation, celebrates the decade mark of the finest English hip-hop label ever to steal its name from an absurdist art movement. Weirdly, *Well Deep* ignores the first two years of their decade (compiled elsewhere) and truly kicks off where the label entered the collective conscious—in 1999, when a baritone half-rapper, half-raggamuffin calling himself Roots Manuva slung idiosyncratic lines of mysticism and London in-jokes over pillowy trip-hop bass and homemade effects.

The result was refreshing: At the time, the Big Apple was the home of the underground, with noise and fury pouring out of every record; somehow, journo Will Ashon convinced Ninja Tune (never strangers to conventional hip-hop despite their instrumental leanings) to launch a sister label aimed to give those inspired weirdoes who were cropping up on both sides of the Atlantic a chance to be heard. Naturally, things started with a bridge of sorts (Luke Vibert and Juice Aleem's collaboration as Alpha Phyme; check your favorite online shop as it's left off here) but the handmade space-cadet beats and superstar charisma of Mr. Manuva laid the early blueprint. Soon, Big Dada was distributing Slick Rick's spiritual successor, smooth storyteller Ty (check "Look for Me" here); thrillingly incomprehensible pirate crew New Flesh; and drawing in free-spirited Yanks like Mike Ladd and his insular, hilarious Infesticons/Majesticons projects.

Its place in the underground already secure, Big Dada incubated a crucial critical success from *CLOUDEAD*, a splinter of the Bay Area's art-house Anticon collective. Represented here by a sing-along live version of "Physics of a Bicycle" (from the *Peel Sessions*, no less—art recognize art), *CLOUDEAD*'s dream-like, psychedelic nasal-hop garnered attention, incited a thousand message-board fistfights, and connected with the children

of "Golden Era" rap. For all that, Big Dada has always remained aware that its place is in the headphones and the underground club, and *Well Deep's* best banger comes from its most unlikely source: French rhyme crew TTC, whose "Dans le Club" from 2004 would still fit in the bassbins next to Timbaland's latest, with hyperactive acid lines spiking the mix.

In that context, it only makes sense that Big Dada is now home to the (maybe retired) Wiley, once tipped as a superstar from the U.K.'s clattering grime scene, who found himself eclipsed by protégé Dizzee Rascal. Despite his brush with fame, Wiley's "50/50" remains compelling, with nearly off-beat raps bouncing off squashed bass and pitiless synths, and nestled perfectly among the rest of the restless bohos who found a sympathetic ear at the label. But for all the grimy, occasionally dour authenticity of Big Dada's original crew, it might be the carefree absurdity of one the label's newest acts that sums up the possibilities represented in its first decade: Spank Rock's "Sweet Talk" leads the pack of new contributors with its punk-electro rhymes and sing-along hooks.

A decade of the U.K.'s most intriguing hip-hop label can hardly be summed up in two discs, and if there's anything journalists love more than knotty beats and dense rhymes, it's freebies, so there's a throw-in bonus DVD with every promo clip made by the label (check Roots Manuva's audacious school-sports romp for "Witness") and a video mix, all adding up to proof that Big Dada deserves its place among the vanguard of underground labels, without question. *Rob Geary*

**DJ REKHA PRESENTS BASEMENT BHANGRA**

Koch/US/CD  
New Yorkers have enjoyed Rekha's Basement Bhangra parties for a decade, but with her debut mix album, the London-born DJ fixes her sight on the rest of the country. Though a few names here would be familiar even to Middle America (the once-Jay-Z-remixed Panjabi MC and Wyclef Jean guesting on one of Rekha's own tracks), bhangra—the combination of traditional Punjabi folk elements, especially vocals, and electronic beats—never quite achieved household-name status in the States. This compilation, though, shows the skills that have kept Rekha's party going for so long, particularly her expert programming, with hip-hop- and dancehall-derived bhangra. Here's hoping this set is more than just a one-off. *Luciana Lopez*

**ESKIMO VOLUME V: THE GLIMMERS**

Eskimo/BEL/CD  
You'd be hard pressed to find a DJ duo with as keen a sense of the leftfield as Belgium's The Glimmers. With acclaimed mixes for the major players (Fabric, *DJ-Kicks*) checked off the list, Mo and Benoëlie's latest adventure finds them back at homebase with a 19-track contribution to Eskimo's burgeoning mix series. The Glimmers have an ear for great drums, and while this may be most apparent in their trademark love for percussive, low-BPM disco, and funk (Mac Attack, Pop Dell'Arte), it's also found here in genres as diverse as '80s French pop, German gypsy rock, and L.A. electro. From soulful chanteuses to tweaked-out acid synths, *Eskimo Volume V* is a mix that's dazzlingly unique. *Ross Holland*

**FUSE PRESENTS SHINEDOE**

Music Man/BEL/CD  
Unfortunately, skilled female techno DJ/producers are still something of a rarity on the international circuit. Belgian DJ/producer and Intacto label chief Shinedoe offers an exception to the sausage fest, and her first mix CD for Fuse's franchise delivers a smoothly listenable, if somewhat safe, techno-and-house selection. Oddly, Shinedoe's flow mostly stays at one level, without much BPM variance; plus, opening with DJ Bone expounding upon the meaning of dance music feels a bit tired in 2007. Still, even amid talents like Ron Trent and Underground Resistance, Shinedoe's own "Dialogue" offers one of the brighter spots here. Check Dave Ellesmere's sweeping synth shuffle "Today, Tomorrow and Yesterday" for one of this year's most exceptional dancefloor finds. *Janet Tzou*

**LOTERIA BEATS MIXTAPE VOLUME 1**

Nacional/US/CD  
KCRW DJ Raul Campos furthers the station's pledge of eclecticism with his first mixtape, an overview of the style found on his nightly "Nocturna" show. At 90 minutes, Loteria offers a great feel for Campos' extended set, starting off with Tijuana techno heads Nortec Collective before a meaty middle of Latin hip-hop from Cuarto Poder, Papashanty, and Choc Quib Town. Then Campos flips the (light)switch with a series of leisurely, luxurious electronic slow jams like Thievery Corporation's "Exilio." Here the proceedings get *muy durmiente*, but a Masters at Work remix of Sergio Mendes' famous "Mas Que Nada" is one of many on Loteria's latter half that make taking the gamble worth it. *Rachel Shimp*

**ONE FIVE ZERO**

n5MD/US/2xCD  
IDM is still alive and figuring itself out, despite those three scarlet letters braving critics' stones. Emotion seems to be the next frontier for the faithful. Oakland's n5MD label has spent the past five years exploring IDM's melancholic side, and ballads are the order of the day for this milestone comp of n5MD regulars. Bitcrush and Last Days achieve a sublime balance between ambient sleepwalking and hazy post-rock. At worst, maudlin sentiment hinders a few tracks. Arc Lab's cover of the Tori Amos number "Cornflake Girl" suffers from uneven mixing and operatic melodrama that prods the listener to shed a tear. Emo-IDM? Now that's a genre I fear. *Cameron Macdonald*

**PEANUT BUTTER WOLF PRESENTS: 2K8 B-BALL ZOMBIE WAR**

Stones Throw/US/CD  
If you thought last year's Dan the Automator NBA 2K soundtrack was fire, then this Stones Throw family edition should most definitely flip your wig. With a diverse collection of old, new, and revamped joints and jams from folks like Percee P, Oh No, MED, James Pants, Koushik, and Arabian Prince, it's unfortunate that the concept of the double-sided LP is lost on most music buyers. Yet between the nostalgic Wu-Tang undertones of the J Dilla/MF Doom/Guilty Simpson tag-team jawn "Mash's Revenge," the comedic ghetto-tech romp "Big Girl, Skinny Girl," and the introduction of Madlib and Karriem Riggins as Supreme Team, this comp packs enough punches to rock even the most avid gamers. *Rica "Superbizzee" Washington*

**TROPICALIA: A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT OF SOUND**

Universal Music Latino/US/CD  
There's nothing like a military dictatorship to make you socially aware—a lesson Brazil learned in 1964. Hence *tropicalia*, the 1960s movement that encompassed art, literature, and music as well political consciousness. This compilation celebrates the musical component of *tropicalia*, which set itself purposefully against formulaic pop and opted to push boundaries, laying the foundation for the current *Música Popular Brasileira*. The collection's a fairly safe one, including the movement's biggest names: Gilberto Gil (currently the Brazilian Minister of Culture), Caetano Veloso, the full-throated Gal Costa, and the psyched-out Os Mutantes. Still, if there are no surprises among the artists, the songs themselves have aged well (despite the often-swelling strings), and illuminate a watershed time in Brazilian art. *Luciana Lopez*

**WHEN RHYTHM WAS KING**

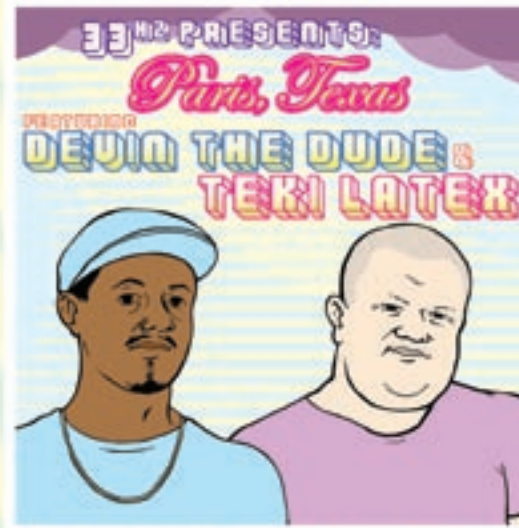
Heartbeat/US/CD  
Heartbeat Records has been on a tear, repackaging and releasing material from Studio One, the hyper-influential Jamaican recording studio. Clement "Coxsone" Dodd, who opened the studio in 1963, was a workaholic, setting up labels, producing constantly, and mentoring up-and-comers. The happy result is a wealth of classic material from his studio, the source of Heartbeat's series. The current installment is unsurprisingly excellent, with contributions from the likes of Dennis Brown (an extended mix of "Created by the Father") and the Wailing Souls, as well as lesser-knowns such as Basil Daley. The enduring popularity of these songs, whose rhythms have been used countless times since their original recording, is no mystery; they are, frankly, just plain good. *Luciana Lopez*



**CINEMATIC: CLASSIC FILM MUSIC REMIXED**

Six Degrees/US/CD  
Considering the historical significance of the film scores revisited on this compilation, it's impossible to not be skeptical of this project. Although upon further inspection, one can see that most of these decades-old soundtrack classics are not necessarily beyond amendment... or at least a little modernization. Organizer Bob Duskis of Six Degrees Records cautiously selected remixers who weren't going to haphazardly rework these groundbreaking instrumentals. Respect is particularly due to the Bombay Dub Orchestra for its take on the "Love Theme from Ben Hur." This stirring sitar-and-string-driven composition could easily be a work of its own, yet the original foundation remains recognizable. Other standouts include Bent's ethereal remix of Fellini's *Roma* soundtrack and King Britt's bouncy hip-hop take, "They Call Me Mr. Tibbs Main Title." While it helps to be familiar with the original scores that inspired this disc, listeners won't be lost without the history. *Max Herman*

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**Black Dice** *Load/Blown* CD/mini-LP/digital  
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**Dan Deacon & Jimmy Joe Roche** *Ultimate Reality* DVD  
Ultimate Reality is a collaborative performance by Baltimore's Dan Deacon and Jimmy Joe Roche. It combines an intense musical composition for electronics and drums with a psychedelic montage that is projected at a monumental scale.  
*Out now on Carpark.*

**Excepter** *'Burger / The Punjab 12"* digital  
Excepter deliver two long dance tracks in a synthetic protest style, mugging the flipside of the sublimated global war machine inherent in the industrial food exploitation in the twin hubs of New York music subculture.  
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**Rings** *Black Habit* CD/digital  
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*Out in January on Paw Tracks.*

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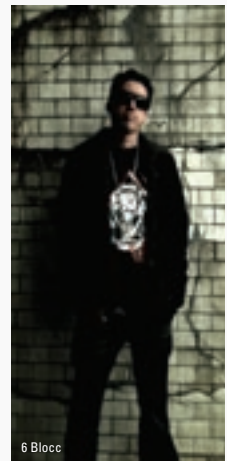
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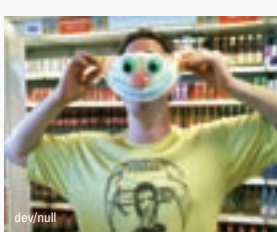


**Basic Needs**  
By Kid Kameleon

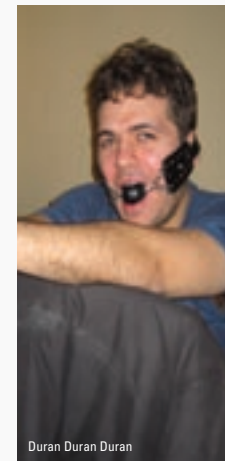
LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



6 Blocc



Bombaman  
dev/null



Duran Duran Duran

Alright, I'm gonna try and weave a tale, one in which I can hardly keep all the players straight but that manages to illustrate the high degree of inter-connectivity in bass music in general, and dubstep in particular. So follow closely.

It starts with one very dedicated man in Portland, Oregon—Jon AD—who runs Anthem Records (a store) and Lozonofono (a label). This year he founded Ludubs, a second label, with a general focus on the heavy/paranoid/tech-y side of dub, and a very loose interpretation of dubstep. Its sonic breadth is challenging, and it was an instant favorite of mine from the get-go. Check the strong catalog, all out in the last four months of '07: **6 Blocc** (a.k.a. venerable West Coast junglist **R.A.W.**) doing two heavy, tech-influenced tracks ("Creal" b/w "Digits") (Pst... those huge reworks of classic dancehall and jungle tunes like "Original Nuttah" you've heard at dubstep tempo? Those are 6 Blocc dubs as well!); **South3rn** doing "Mangione Tribe Dub" and "La Rana," real Ry Cooder-influenced dub, and it's no wonder, considering they're from Texas (check their upcoming EP on Cladestine Cultivations as well as a future LP); **Solvent** (yes, the techno/electro producer from Toronto) gets a rework by **Bombaman** ("Think Like Us [Bombaman Remix]"), which has to be my favorite track at the moment, marrying vocodered "jack your body"-type electro vox with free-tekno beats in a dubstep style. And if that weren't enough, the b-side "Rise Against" is a huge, dark, wacked-out, very hard, very-very awesome track that incorporates aspects of "Mr. Kirk's Nightmare"! Bombaman's stuff is dark, weird, and boundary-pushing, and he's half of **Loeteck**, alongside **XI**, who have some great things coming. He and I also share old-school videogame names, so we're kindred spirits. **DZ**'s dubby "Chalice" b/w "That Bongo Dub" are a lovely couple numbers that show the producer's massive sonic range (his tracks on Hotflush still get me going—best things that came out this summer). For Ludubs 007, they can't reveal too much at this time, but if all goes well it'll be

a bliss-rock/metal/dubstep collaboration, and such collabs are why I think Ludubs maybe be gunning for my label of the year.

Not all goodness is concentrated in the Northwest, so a quick rundown of other spots is in order. L.A.'s **U-Ome** (founder of ragga jungle label X13) has gotten into the dubstep ting, creating the Steps in Time label with solid EPs from **DLX**, **Matty G**, and **OSC**. London's **Blackdown** has the fourth offering from Keysound underway ("Northside Cheng Dub" and "The Bits," which features **Trim**). And Boka will be up to its 17th release by January, with the last few months showing strong EPs from **Dark Angel**, **Macabre Unit**, **SNO**, and **Emalkay**, whose full-length is due in February. That's not to mention the Boka Juniors sub-label, and forthcoming Boka booking agency and t-shirt brand (Bokawear)!

And way out on the other end of the spectrum, a host of old-skool ravers has taken up arms against the nu-school shenanigans of **Klaxons** et al., responding with pure revivalism that's awesomely fun. Perpetrators include **Bong Ra** (under his new **Glowstyx** moniker) and **DJ Donna Summer** (Jason Forrest returning to his "original" first name). Their LPs are called *Class of 1992* and *Panther Tracks*, respectively, and come out soon on Cock Rock Disco, while fellow ex-ravers **Duran Duran Duran** and **dev/null** are looking for a label home for their new project **Ravetasm Posse**. Hands in the air!



**En Tu Casa**  
By Nick Chacona

HOUSEKEEPING, FROM TECH AND MINIMAL TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



Pete Dafeet  
Sir Piers



Mark Farina  
Haneef Raisani

The waning half of 2007 has been generous for fans of **Joe Clausell**'s Sacred Rhythm label. First there was a quick injection of back-stock vinyl into the market that included the ultra-rare unreleased mixes of **Instant House**'s "Awade," the brand-new single "Lugar Precioso" by **Juzu** (a.k.a. **Moochy**) (mixed by Clausell), and the extremely limited 18-minute, single-sided vinyl release of Malian singer **Salif Keita**'s "Tolon Willie," all within a two-month span. Yet there's more! By the end of the year, expect the new 7" from **Bayara Citizens**, "Juru Music," and reissues of the classic Spiritual Life releases "Dan Gna" by **Les Go**, and **Jephte Guillaume**'s "The Prayer." Clausell also lent some of the SR magic to a mix of **Dennis Ferrer**'s summer smash "Touch the Sky" (King Street), which has sustained interest in the tune throughout the year.

Speaking of **Jephte** and King Street, he has also been on a roll of his own with the highly successful remix of **Monday Michiru**'s "The Right Time," and the collaborative effort with **AK**, "Shining Your Way," both for said label. Jephte also let out a few advance whites for his upcoming "Papa Loco" single on his own Tet Kale imprint, which had Japanese house heads rushing to the shops. Finished copies should be out here now. Also on the subject of Japan, but in a totally different area of the house spectrum, bump-house superhero DJ **Mark Farina** returns to the fray with his latest mix CD, *Live in Tokyo* (OM). On it, you'll find tunes by the usual suspects like **Ken ECB**, **Phil Weeks**, **Giom Inland Knights**, and **Jason Hodges**.

Over in Dubai—yes, Dubai—**Haneef Raisani** has been working hard during to put the Middle Eastern mecca of finance and opulence on the house-music map. After hosting regular parties with international DJs, eventually Haneef decided to start a label and Raisani was born. Now distributed through Topplers in France, Raisani has a full release schedule through the end of the year, with singles from **DJ Pap** and **Cei Bei**, **Lenny Fontana**

& **Carla Prather**, **Aston Martinez** (with a **Kenny Hawkes** mix!) and **Gregory Del Piero**.

**Sir Piers** is back again, this time on his own Curious imprint, with "Back When," a ditty about the old days when everything was "better." Arranged and mixed in typical Piers production style, the lead vocals come from none other than **Robert Owens**, so one can't help but be reminded of Owens' performance on **Harry Choo Choo**'s "I Go Back" throwback from '03. Mixes by **Dirt Diggers** and **Liquid People** will probably have their desired effects, due to some solid production, but it's doubtful that the record will have people reminiscing in such a fond way down the road.

**Pete Dafeet** also returns on his home base label, Lost My Dog, with a deep, acidic burner called "Lungs." The tune's spoken-word vocals, unique cadence, simple pianos, moving bassline, and string synths recall that luvved-up, early-'90s San Francisco vibe. Speaking of S.F., recent Bay Area transplant from Montreal **Fred Everything** takes "Lungs" to a darker place with an absolutely brilliant and versatile rework that could be played just about anywhere by just about anyone.

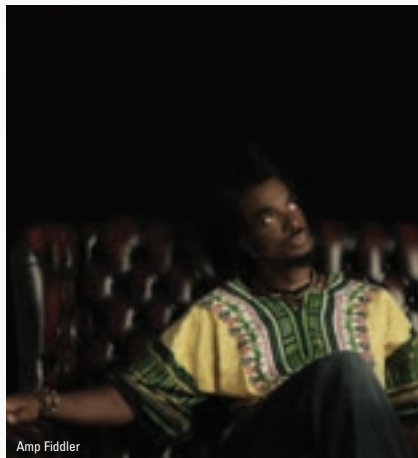


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## Broken Business By Peter Nicholson

FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Amp Fiddler



DL Jones

From the mellow to the rough, the chill to the hectic, I've got you covered from A to Z. And this month, I'll make it real easy when you hit your favorite local record pusher or those faceless merchants of music on the interwebs and put everything in easy alphabetical order. Don't say I never did nothin' for ya!

A is for **Amp Fiddler**. Making the rounds as a digital promo, "If I Don't" pits his honey tenor against **Corinne Bailey Rae's** rich contralto for a real swinger—bits of clarinet, Amp's deft touch on the piano, and little horn stabs make for jazz-soul heaven on a 1930s tip. I'm coming back most often to the radio edit, but **Foreign Beggars** step up for a nice shuffler with a big kick drum.

D is for **DL Jones**. Definitely on the hip-hop end of the spectrum, this Detroit cat has an album coming on Jerome Derradj's outstanding Still Music label, and the 12" has **One Be Lo** rocking the mic over some sweet alto sax on the b for "Gray," with the aforementioned Amp Fiddler popping up again on the a for "Lonely." Some stuttered girl-group vocal loops and funky horn harmonies kick into double-time halfway through.

H is for **Hanna & Beatr8**. Nik Weston's Mukatsuku label keeps getting stronger, and "Better Than Nothing," from Swedish singer Hann Olsen & beat-meister David Levisson, is a stone-cold classic, with fat hip-hop beats, grand piano, and Hanna's seductive singing. **Bakura (Domu and Marin)** and **Guynamite** also take their best shots—I'm going to give the nod to Guynamite's version, which bounces some seriously chopped and compressed bruk beats off a squashed bassline.

L is for **Los Charly's Orchestra**. A new project from London label Imagenes, LCO offers up a gem of a 12. The a-side is a nu-disco jam featuring none other than **Noel McKoy**, but hidden on the b is a super-groovy broken version of "Man in Me"—think bruk Motown, with tense but understated strings, judicious use of congas and timbales, and some wah-wah guitar. Definitely different, and definitely worth seeking out.

N is for **Nicole Willis**. The U.K. soul sensation squares off against **Afronaut** on "Holdin' On," her latest single for ATC. The 'Naut levels some huge drums that will certainly get folks rocking, but I'm also feeling **Simbad's** spooky—almost dubstep-tech—takes just as much.

Q is for **Quinteto Instrumental de Musica Moderna**. Their name may not exactly roll off my lazy gringo tongue, but I certainly can get down to the sweet swing and jumping percussion that drive "Gandinga, Mondongo y Sandunga," just one of six tracks from different Cuban artists on the hot *Nueva Vision* EP (Sonar Kollektiv). Those tireless cats in **Jazzanova** have collected half a dozen hard-to-find-on-vinyl cuts of the finest Cuban quality. Thanks, boys!

Z is for **Zed Bias**. He's got an album coming, but first there's the sampler, *Experiments With Biasonics Vol. 1* (Sick Trumpet). On the futuristic-soul tip is "Givin' It Up," with Pete Simpson, but I keep going back to the instrumental of "Can't You Let Go?" with its dissonant bass, crumpled percussion, and all-around ill vibe. Rewind selector!

## Future Jazz Guest Reviews: Karizma

You might think that starting a DJ career at the wee age of 13, could burn you out on the whole deal before you're of drinking age, but not DJ Karizma. From his production work with Mary J. Blige and Kim English to his remixes of Everything but the Girl and Roy Ayres, to his *Coast 2 Coast* and *Soul Heaven* (with Masters at Work hero Kenny Dope) mix discs, Karizma (a.k.a. Chris Clayton, a.k.a. Kohesive) has solidified his place as a veteran of the scene with every production. Karizma's latest LP, *A Mind of Its Own* (R2), is chock-full of the soulful, jazzy house and broken-beat wonders that he has built his name on. But as *A Mind of Its Own* also takes turns through R&B and hip-hop territory, it manages to split time equally between the lounge and the dancefloor—a perfect combo for someone as varied as Karizma, both in the studio and as a DJ. Here a few of the jazzier offerings that he has been digging lately. *Ross Holland*  
[www.myspace.com/kohesiveproductions](http://www.myspace.com/kohesiveproductions)

### CHRISTIAN PROMMER

#### DRUM LESSONS

Compost/GER/12

This album has been talked about since its first singles started circulating, and I must say that I'm glad the whole thing is finally out. Christan Prommer, most noted for his work on the Compost label, has reproduced classic house anthems like Fingers Inc.'s "Can You Feel It," Jaydee's "Plastic Dreams," Isolee's "Beau Mot Plage," and Rhythim Is Rhythim's "Strings of Life," among others, in fine dancefloor-jazz form. This album hasn't left my bag since I got it. A definite winner. *DJ Karizma*

### BENNY SINGS

#### "FEATHER"

Sonar Kollektiv/GER/12

Benny Sings is an artist I just recently found out about and this single, "Feather," is right up my alley. Smooth vocals and a mix of folksy and electronic beats run this track; this kills in my downtempo DJ sets. *DJ Karizma*

### TONY ALLEN

#### "KILODE (CARL CRAIG REMIX)"

Honest Jon's/UK/12

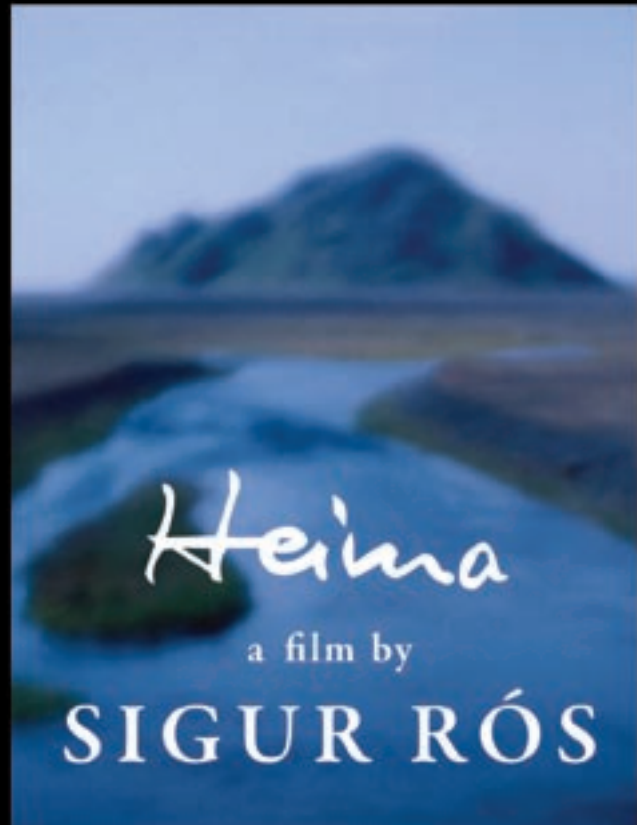
Another mix of the classic "Kilode," this time by Carl Craig, hits from the broken end of things. Pure fire as the groove rolls on and becomes infectious. Already a favorite of mine due to the remixes done by Waajeed; check this one out! *DJ Karizma*

### AFRONAUT/SIMBAD VS. NICOLE WILLIS AND THE SOUL INVESTIGATORS

#### "HOLDING ON"

Above the Clouds/UK/12

Here the lovely Nicole Willis gets the remix treatment from the Bugz in the Attic camp. Willis' soulful vocals and Afronaut's melodies make this a broken-beat anthem for me. *DJ Karizma*



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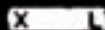
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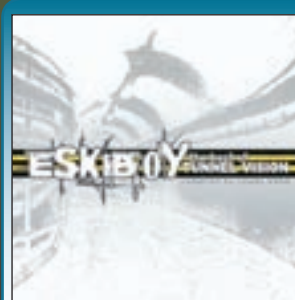
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## MEDITATE ON BASS WEIGHT with these new releases from FORCED EXPOSURE



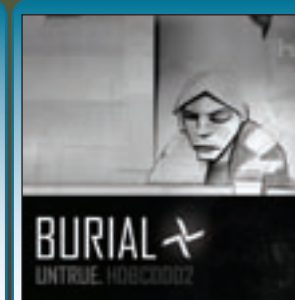
**ESKIBOY**  
*The Best of Tunnel Vision*  
2CD

Collecting the cream of his landmark *Tunnel Vision* mix tape series, this is the definitive collection of arguably the most influential musician in grime — Eskiboy aka Wiley. Acid blips and war dubs clash with his trademark microphone attack — on par with JME, Skepta or Dizzee Rascal.



**PINCH**  
*Underwater Dancehall*  
2CD/2LP

The debut full-length by Rob Ellis is a truly stunning dubstep missive that plays like an album instead of a collection of singles. Featuring vocal contributions by Juakali, Yolanda and Indi Kaur, Pinch sets the bar high and takes the genre to an entirely new level.



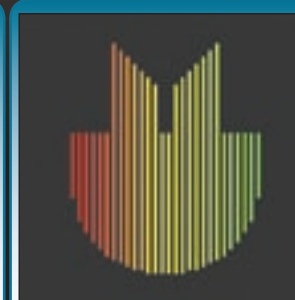
**BURIAL**  
*Untrue*  
CD/2LP

With his eponymous debut now widely regarded as the benchmark work in an ever-widening genre, Burial returns with the most anticipated record of 2007. *Untrue* is weird soul, vaporized R&B and smudged 2-step garage, haunted by the ghosts of rave and underscored by geologic rumbles of growling bass.



**POLE**  
*Steingarten Remixes*  
CD

*Steingarten Remixes* is an assembly of reworkings by friends and colleagues of Stefan Betke's latest critically-lauded release. Dimbiman, Deadbeat, Shackleton and other dub & techno chemists imbue these tracks with their own signature sound. "...a brilliant tech-dub minimalist." —Time Out NY



**DISRUPT**  
*Foundation Bit*  
CD

Disrupt is Jan Gleichmar — curator of the Jahtari website and label imprint — satiating the masses who have eaten up dubstep and whose skulls will be tingling as *Foundation Bit* chews up woofers everywhere. Smoked-out, heavy dub harkening back to the glory days of '80s dancehall. An absolute monster.



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**Read the Label**  
By Jesse "Drosco" Serwer

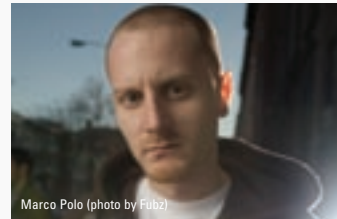
HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



Kidz In the Hall



Joell Ortiz



Marco Polo (photo by Fabiz)

Fresh on the heels of his sublime *Port Authority* LP—a rap-album-of-the-year contender, for sure—producer **Marco Polo** has delivered yet another banger. “The Radar: Original & Remix” b/w “Marquee” (Rawkus/Soulspace) finds the Canadian-born Brooklynite one-upping himself with an even more solid remix of his own “The Radar” (featuring **Large Professor**). Flipping the original’s “UFO” sample in a whole new direction, Polo throws a silky bassline, strings, and a spare sax note into a stew that feels like one of Large Pro’s or Pete Rock’s unfuckwithable mid-’90s remixes.

Sure, it seems like no one west of the George Washington Bridge wants to hear rap songs about New York anymore, but **Juganot’s** “En Why Cee” (Strictly Live) should change at least a few haters’ minds. Aided solidly by **Joell Ortiz** and the very hit-or-miss **Uncle Murda**, the Queens MC (who’s not to be confused with the Bronx group, Juggaknots) flows supremely over **Frequency** and **Scram Jones’** subtle yet insistent beat. Speaking of Ortiz, Aftermath’s next-in-line makes a highly unexpected appearance on indie rockers **Battles’** recent *Tonto* EP. **DJ EMZ’s** take on “Leyendecker,” a bouncy track from the *Mirrored* LP that already seemed kind of hip-hop to begin with, doesn’t alter the original’s DNA much, adding just enough pocket room for Ortiz’s verse. The result is thoroughly enjoyable, if only for the Bizarro World factor of hearing the Read the Label-approved lyricist rock over one of our favorite bands.

**Kidz in the Hall** rapper **Naledge’s** white-collar rhymes (“*Dropped 40 Gs a year to get the best degree/Now I’m back to spread love in the streets*”) aren’t always on-point, but when you’ve got beats like the ones producer **Double-O** brings to the table, you can afford to slack a little. “Clothes, Hoes, and Liquor”—lyrically a less dark update of Mobb Deep’s “Drink Away the Pain”—from the pair’s recent *Detention* EP (Major League Entertainment) and the **Mick Boogie**-aided mixtape of the same name, sounds like The

Ummah (A Tribe Called Quest’s production unit) by way of Just Blaze. Elsewhere, “Lose Your Mind” and “Hush” attain Kanye-like soul highs.

I’m not exactly sure where **Mullyman’s** “Hustleman Shuffle” originates, but it’s on his MySpace page and there’s a video posted on YouTube—these days, that’s as good as anything. “Hustleman” finds the hard-nosed Baltimore MC putting his own spin on snap music, co-opting the decidedly un-gangsta sub-genre to create a snap dance even the hardest D-boy can get down with. Hammering the point home, the hilarious video enlists Matthew Lesko (the crazy guy with the question marks on his suit from late-night infomercials), who does the titular dance on the streets of West Baltimore. Really, it’s not as goofy as it sounds. Okay, it is, but Mullyman pulls it off while the formulaic beat works perfectly in the context of the song.

While we’re in Baltimore, the city’s most complicated rapper, **Labtekwon**, has taken up residence in **Tao of Slick**, a new trio mining jazz in a Diggable/Tribe/Portishead-like fashion. As passé as that might sound, the group’s highly obscure new LP (on which Lab uses the alias **Piankhi 7**), *Jazz Hall: The Epitome of Epiphany* (Ankh Ra Recordings) is quite a find. Producer **Thur Deephrey’s** off-kilter piano-based loops are rich with unusual texture (particularly the unappealingly named “Cosmic Lullaby”) while Lab, one of the most thought-provoking rappers working today, comes full-force throughout. Worth seeking out. (P.S. It’s on iTunes.)

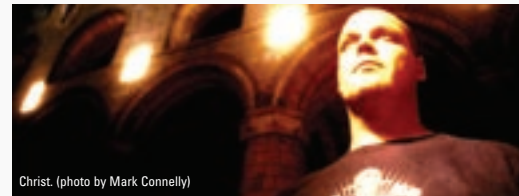


**After Silence**  
By Martin De Leon

THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Blaqstarr



Christ. (photo by Mark Connelly)



Busy P

Purple sneakers clap against the sidewalk, ending another dancing-and-good-New-York-pizza night. But, I bug out because this year, like most, has gone by too fast. 2007 won’t go quietly, though.

**Grizzly Bear** is truly the next bunch of animal-themed heroes. Following the haunting *Yellow House*, their great new EP, *Friend* (Warp), offers beautiful choir-sung reworks of old songs (“Alligator”) and remixes by **Band of Horses** and Brazilian electro-kids **CSS**. Both bears—**Panda** and Grizzly—tore shit up (like it was a little bunny) this year.

Pagan animal-worshippers still can’t handle **Christ’s** beats, though (note the period; it’s not the sandal-wearing one). The Scottish producer (pronounced “krissed”) has a creepy new EP, *Bike* (Benbecula), which outshines his friends Boards of Canada with minimal, ping-pong gems (“Round the Rigg”) and nostalgic glitch (“Chopper”) that doesn’t grow old. I need to go to Glasgow soon, if this is the country’s alien soundtrack.

But how are you going to buy that soundtrack? This year, Other Music opened its dope digital-music store, Amazon began selling DRM-free MP3s, and Radiohead gave away its new album, free-agent style, for optional donation. What will the future of selling music bring? I have no idea, but the old-fashioned good record store isn’t dead. Consider this a write-in nomination for Austin’s small End of an Ear, which exemplifies everything selling music *should* be about: community, forward-thinking spaces, and Can vinyl. Visit the terrific store in South Austin next time you’re nursing a SXSW-induced hangover.

You’ll also find in those record bins Mexico’s political rap-rock quartet (it hurts me to type it, really) **Molotov**, who had the brilliant idea to record four separate EPs rather than one album. Member **Tito Fuentes’** electro/thrasy EP *Sin Titulo* (Universal) is the best of all four. His trashy, Brooklyn-via-Mexico City joints (“Yoyo”) are catchy as hell and rival Klaxons for your attention (“Por?”). Put some synthesizers in your tacos.

Don’t like synth-punk? Then slap on some Iraqi mash-up philosophy from **DJ Foundation**. From the genius who meshed porno samples and readings of the Koran (“God Is Dead”) comes the single “I Shot You Babe” (Metal Postcard), which is a gunshot-riddled remake of Sonny and Cher’s classic (in case you needed it spelled out for you). With its simple makeover using a gurgling Moog line and the word “shot” instead of “got,” you will either hate it or see it as the protest to Americans, you know, invading a country or whatever.

Nothing beats another year living with war than limited-edition 7”s from *The Fader* and Southern Comfort. Ed Banger whiz **Busy P** (a.k.a. Pedro Winter) slows it down and brings back that syrupy *Knight Rider* rhythm on the genius-titled “Pedrophilia.” P kills it, much like the flip-side hero **DJ Blaqstarr**, who drops “Feel in the Air,” a fifth-dimension dancefloor riddim brought down to Maryland. Yes, *that* good.

The caps-lock function will not fairly express my enthusiasm for **Sappho**, who uses dreamy laptop compositions on *The Civilized Thing to Do* (Poni Republic). Part My Bloody Valentine and part Fennesz, the quintet of Mexican youth chooses tender electronics to protest their rough urbanism. They make me hopeful about the future.

Some highlights from 2007: Pour a little liquor for departed New York experimental club **Tonic**, and celebrate futuristic singer **Santogold’s** psychedelic R&B, **DJ Koze’s** great remix of **Battles’** robot single “Atlas,” and the *XLRRR*-approved next folks to melt brains (**Telepathe**, Merok Records, **Operator**, **Aa**, and **Team Doyobi**).

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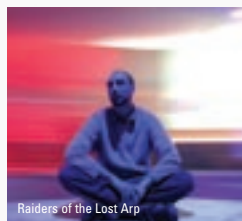


## Bubble Metropolis By **ML Tronik**

TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Pedro Cali



Raiders of the Lost Arp



Danton Eeprom



Dia

There's something special about techno amplified in an outdoor setting, I found, after DJing an outdoor party with a bunch of the following tracks. I think **Andreas Kauffelt** and **Toby Izui** must know it, because their newest, "Sabako" b/w "Dagashi" (Karton), is the kind of pulsating, propelling stuff that bounces off of the rocks and trees rather nicely.

A bit deeper and dubbier, but still very funky is **Burnski's** "Skip Tha" (Morris Audio). This synco-pated-bleep journey is taken up a few notches by the SLG remix on the b-side. Roast your marshmallows to it.

Coming from the Spanish underground techno scene (a place that I'm convinced must have outdoor all-nighters year-round) is **Dia**. Her debut release, the *Cooperacion Maxima* EP (UVDOG), has a minimalist bent, with strong melodic elements to it. In other words, there's more to it than those flavor-of-the-month techno noises thrown in "just because". I like the title track best.

If you're up for some outdoor experimentation, there's a French dude named **Danton Eeprom**. There are pictures of this guy on the internet doing a live P.A. in a coat and top hat. I have no idea what that's all about, but his newest release is called *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (Infine), and it's apparently influenced by a book of the same name written by 19th century author Thomas De Quincey. So to recap: He's French, he has an awkward name, he's inspired by an obscure English writer, and his music is pretty weird. Got that? Good!

For lovers of that retro Chicago jack style, Clone has released a sampler featuring two of their most popular artists, **Gibson Fowler** and the enigmatic **Orgue Electronique**. Both tracks are extremely faithful reproductions of that classic Chi-town sound. Kind of fitting that a label called Clone would release this, actually! Most impressive is "On a String," Orgue Electronique's synth-laden epic.

Also for the synth heads is **Pedro Cali's** *Time for Change* EP (Fine Art Recordings). Cali is

a Belgian producer, but this MP3-only four-track release is Detroit tech-house goodness; lots of tasty beats and keyboard work here. "Distant Brother" is the strongest track on the release, and conjures images of sonic sunsets on faraway alien places. That qualifies as outdoors, right?

Also on a similar tip is the new one from **Raiders of the Lost Arp**. Their releases are always a treat and this one, *Beyond the Dark* (Nature), is no exception, as it comes with remixes by Detroit legends **Los Hermanos** and **Galaxy 2 Galaxy** (a.k.a. **UR's Mike Banks!**) The original actually sounds very much like it's an homage to UR's techno-jazz sound.

Lastly, two new tracks from Detroit techno maverick **Terence Dixon**. I included one of Dixon's **Population One** cuts in the very first Bubble Metropolis podcast mix, and now he gives us not one, but two separate releases after a long hiatus. "Rush Hour" is one of Dixon's early releases and Holland's Rush Hour imprint has re-released it, with two devastating remixes from **Aardvarck** and **DJ Rolando**. It's jagged, it's stark, it's music to dance to in the fog. Following that is his *Directions* EP (Underl\_ne), featuring five Motown bombs. Ten years ago, I would've called these cuts "tracky." Now, I just call them uncompromisingly minimal. Bang it out at your next bolt-cutter-powered event!



## Techno Guest Reviews: Chica Paula

Paula Schopf (a.k.a. Chica Paula) may have made her name playing techno and ambient records at the Ocean Club's celebrated Sunday-night party in Berlin, but recently it's her work in the studio and behind the mic that has garnered the most attention. In 2003, the Chilean-born Schopf teamed up with Max Loderbauer (Sun Electric) to create the electronic-pop project Chica and The Folder. Their sophomore release, *Under the Balcony* (Monika), drifts through fluffy ambient drones, sparse downtempo rhythms, and uplifting pop choruses, but it's nearly impossible to listen to without noticing the shadowy minimalism and glitch of Berlin techno. It's not a big surprise—Schopf can still be found behind the decks all over the world. Here are a few techno records you might catch her playing. *Ross Holland*  
[www.chicaandthefolder.com](http://www.chicaandthefolder.com)

### MONOBLOCK ESAS COSAS EP

Cynosure/CAN/12

Monoblock is a pair of producers from Uruguay named Guillermo Miranda and Martin Teysera. They have released records on the acclaimed label Archipel as well as the Britain's Immigrant. This EP from the house of Cynosure is a classic floor-filler! Three extremely well produced tech-house tracks that have an impressive use of sounds as well as flowing kick drums. *Chica Paula*

### PAUL FRICK DO SOMETHING EP

Kalk Pets/GER/12

Kalk Pets is the (so far) totally underrated dance/club sub-label of Karaoke Kalk. Number 12 in the catalog is from the young Berlin producer Paul Frick. Four great tracks, which, with perfect timing, bring house music back to the (Berlin) club scene. Definitely check out b1. Whoever likes "Soul Train" by Soundstream should really like this piece. *Chica Paula*

### MATTHEW STYLES "SOURCES"

Horizontal/GER/12

This is a record by a Berlin resident, Matthew Styles. He is first and foremost co-manager of the London label Crosstown Rebels and also has a reputation as a brilliant DJ. With this record on Dinky's label, he fits right into the Horizontal stable. If you are still standing at the end of a long night of clubbing, then you'll be crazy for this music: dark, deep, and delicate. *Chica Paula*

### JOHN KEYS "INLAND EMPIRE"

Crosstown Rebels/UK/12

John Keys is Dandy Jack and Andres Garcia, and it's just my favorite kind of music for the 21st century—this is how contemporary electronic dance music should sound. DJs of the world, get this record and bring this music to the people! From extravagant club hits to pop ballads, this record offers a taster for his album, due out in 2008. A master cometh. *Chica Paula*

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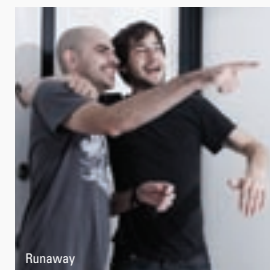
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REVIEWS | COLUMNS



**Apocalypse Wow  
By Roy Dank**

TRAVERSING TIME AND SPACE IN SEARCH OF ODDBALL  
DANCE GOODIES



Happy holidays! Let's be festive, shall we? The end of the year sees a bevy of new jams from the disco galaxy, and what better way to mark the occasion than by giving the gift of vinyl? I'm sure you can find an extra-large stocking to stuff those 12" bad bwoys into.

First off comes a double-header courtesy of **The Emperor Machine**. Mr. Meecham's been on a roll, and there's certainly no sign of letting up. The doyen of dark disco continues his never-ending roll of remix work by tackling **They Came From the Stars, I Saw Them's** latest single, "Signals." As you've come to expect from the fledgling THISISNOTANEXIT label, The Emperor Machine delivers the goods and then some for the first half of his one-two holiday-release punch. The second one comes in the form of his latest single for DC Recordings. Culled from last year's *Vertical Tones & Horizontal Noise* full-length, "No Sale No ID" gets the overhaul from none other than **Simian Mobile Disco**. Odd pairing, eh? Nonetheless, the boys do it up extra special for DC, delivering a monster anthem that still retains that Emperor Machine post-apocalyptic vibe.

If you're thinking of adding a certain Parisian flair to your gifts this year, the City of Lights has more than a few tasty treats to offer. The mysterious new edits label Les Edits Du Golem drops its third release, "Cosmic Rock," and goes all, um, cosmic on us. Word on the street it that a famous French duo is behind this wacky 12", but there's really no telling where and when this came from. If you can still find it, be sure to snatch up the second Golem release as all three edits are tops!

Speaking of edits, the **D-I-R-T-Y** boys are at it again, finally releasing the long-awaited, super-limited, single-sided 10" of **Pilooski's** edit of John Miles' "Stranger in the City." Make haste on that one! Rumors abound of Pilooski contributing an edits 12" for the mighty Mindless Boogie imprint, so keep yer eyes peeled for that, too.

On the original-music tip, **Cosmo Vitelli** drops his latest solo outing, "Le Radiateur," on his own

I'm a Cliché imprint, and what a corker it is! Vitelli's in top form these days, what with both this and his remix of **Rodion's** "Electric Soca" on Gomma, and let's not forget the man's A&R prowess. I'm a Cliché continues to roll out the good times with the sophomore single from Brooklyn disconauts **Runaway**. On "She Did It for the Money," Marcos Cabral and Jacques Renault tread murky waters with a deep, dubby, and dark sound I'm thoroughly feeling.

Parisian stalwarts Versatile round out the year with two fantastic singles, including the debut single from **Etienne Jaumet**, who's one half of **Zombie Zombie**. Jaumet comes with the goods on "Repeat Again After Me," rolling out a sax solo to end all sax solos! Innervations heroes **Ame** are reeled in for remix duties and somehow manage to improve on the original. Versatile's MVP, **i:Cube**, never disappoints, and his latest EP, *Prophetization*, touches on disco grooves and Detroit techno in his own inimitable style.

Last but by no means least, I gotta give it up for the good folks at Permanent Vacation. Label heads Tom and Benji have unveiled their own studio project, **Only Fools and Horses**, backing their inaugural single, "Spectacle Wins," with the DFA's **Holy Ghost!**'s very first remix. Both are gems in their own right, as is **Lexx's** first offering for the label, "Axis Shift." The disco train rides on!



**Downbeat Diaspora  
By Rico "Superbizzee"  
Washington**

GETTING YOU UP ON THE SHARPEST SOUL,  
FUNK, AND R&B



What up, y'all! I've made my list and checked it twice! Got a bag of blue funk all groovy n' nice! Don't be mad about the coal in your stocking, just bump these joints and get your stereo rockin'. 'Cause you know your man got soul by the pound with plenty of wax to go 'round. So while Mr. Claus is playin' favorites, here's some jams for you and yours! Do yourself a favor: disturb a neighbor by rattlin' some trunks and stompin' some floors!

If you thought homegrown, U.S.A.-grade funk was the best on the market, sample some funk from the equator by the late Brazilian wild man **Tim Maia!** Word on the street is that Luaka Bop Records is prepping a collection of Maia's seminal funk joints to be released as the fourth installment in their *World Psychedelic Classics* series. If you didn't know that Tim Maia was to Brazilian funk what Fela Kuti was to Afrobeat, *Nobody Can Live Forever: The Existential Soul of Tim Maia* will mos def help you understand!

After excavations in Africa and Brazil, U.K. tastemaker **Gilles Peterson** is pointing his funky shovel towards U.S. shores once again with *Gilles Digs America 2* (Luv N' Haight/Ubiquity). Doubling your pleasure with more dusty finds on this second excursion from the likes of **Ramp, Al Jarreau**, and **Mary Lou Williams**, Gilles proves he's a mean wax-hunting machine of a higher pedigree than your average eBay vinyl vulture.

War. What is it good for? Well if you got yourself a Stratocaster, a bass, and a drum kit, you just might be able to channel it into some stone funk! *Wax Poetics* magazine's record label weighs in with its *East of Underground*, a groovin' collection of cover tunes by five enlisted men who won a battle of the bands in Frankfurt, Germany in 1971.

If you thought the **Jackson 5** and **The Sylvers** were the only anomalies in the game, *Home Schooled: The ABCs of Kid Soul* (Numero Group) should serve as a testament to the nationwide phenomenon during the late '60s and early '70s of *Romper Room* funk! Hands down, these 17 pre-pubescent groups give credence to the cliché "big

things come in small packages."

While we're diggin' on Chi-town, Quannum's sister label Cali-Tex got the drop on a previously unreleased early '70s funk project by **Pieces of Peace**. Honestly, y'all, it's unreal how six cuts can groove so tight! Not to mention their collective and individual resumes: co-producing and backing **Syl Johnson**, orchestrating strings for **Michael Jackson's Off the Wall** and **Outkast's Speakerboxx/The Love Below**, joining the camps of **Donny Hathaway** and **Earth, Wind & Fire**. 'Nuff said!

Veteran soulstress **Bettye LaVette** jumped the Mason-Dixon line for her sophomore Anti Records release, *The Scene of the Crime!* Enlisting swamp rockers **Drive-By Truckers** as her backing band, LaVette cut all the tracks at legendary Muscle Shoals, Alabama spot FAME Studios. By the way, cop the vinyl and get a free download link to the full album in MP3 form!

Downtown Records, home of critics' darling **Gnarls Barkley**, is finally releasing the eponymous debut from Philly soul child **Kevin Michael**. **Q-Tip**, **City High's Claudette Ortiz**, **Wyclef Jean**, and **Lupe Fiasco** all chime in on this one, so don't sleep!

**Me'Shell NdegéOcello** is further expanding her experimental wings with *The World Has Made Me the Man of My Dreams* (Emarcy/Universal). A trippy, jazz-funk affair of epic proportions, *Man of My Dreams* enlists the help of the legendary guitarist **Pat Metheny** and vocalist **Sy Smith**, among others, to round out this intergalactic opus.

Well, I'm all tapped out for this year. But never fear; stay tuned for more funk drops in 2008! Until then, keep it tight!



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## Lucky 13 By Toph One

TophOne can be heard every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in San Francisco



Klunkerz (photo by Jerry Riboli)



Simone White

1986 was a rough time to sport a mohawk, bleached Levis, and a skateboard at Galileo High in San Francisco. Among all the gangs from the Fillmore, Chinatown, and Tenderloin, there was our tiny crew of punks, metal heads, skaters, and graffiti writers who hung out on the front benches and kept one another company. And that's where I met Chip Camp. Already well over six feet tall, plus Doc Martens and spiked hair, Chip cut an imposing swath through the crowded hallways, but we became quick friends and running partners. We'd ditch class and skate to the bus yards at Fisherman's Wharf. He'd take me to crazy house parties in Alameda to drink schnapps and make out with skinhead girls. And every weekend, we'd be at the Farm or the On Broadway to see Fang or MDC or Corrosion of Conformity. When my mom and I were sleeping in a car, he thought nothing of inviting me back to stay with him and his parents on Yerba Buena Island for a couple of weeks. And years later I'd stop by his place in the Lower Haight to catch up, and maybe enjoy a bowl of bean soup that was constantly simmering on the stove. A truer and finer friend there never was, and his passing this year leaves his beautiful family and huge circle of friends shattered. "Ride it like you stole it," as the messengers say. And live every day like it's your last. R.I.P. Chip Camp, 1970-2007.

### 1. BOBIWAN SQUEAKY SNEAKER SOUL SESSION indie/US/LP

Mad styles from this Bay Area producer-to-watch. Way more than just a breakbeat record, this features guest vocalists and cuts from VinRoc and Shortkut. Grab two.

### 2. SIMONE WHITE "TAKE THAT" indie/AUST/MP3

One of the Bay's most talented drummer/percussionist/producers, now living in Australia but still making ridiculously funky shit. Isn't it time for a solo album?!

### 3. TOMC3 & PRINCE PO SAGA OF THE SIMIAN SAMURAI Threshold/US/CD, LP

We know what Prince Po (Organized Konfusion) is capable of, but the name TomC3 might be new to many. He's the cat behind Dopestyle 1231 and last year's *Project Polaroid* LP with Kool Keith. Funky, distinctive beats that perfectly match Po's flows.

### 4. DJ CHICKEN GEORGE PRESENTS THE SWED.U.S.H CONNECTION2 Swedish Brandy/SWE/12EP

Four lovely tracks here—from the Afro-Latin vibes of Adrian Quesada's "Overthrewed!" to J-Boogie's groovy funk to the broken-soul of Illvibe featuring Lady Alma. Cocktails for Chicken George and the Texas-Sweden connection!

### 5. DJ BUCK "NERVOUS ACID" Tu-Rong/US/13

I pretty much figured Buck fell off the edge of the earth, but here he is covering the Bobby Konders classic for this new off-shoot of Rong Records. Holy shit—what's not to love?!

### 6. ALL TEETH AND KNUCKLES CLUB HITS TO HIT THE CLUB WITH Lujo-PishPosh/US/CD

By far my favorite new S.F. band of the last few years, ATAK bring their fucked-up electro-tech hip-hop styles to their debut full-length. Check "Let's Undress and Listen to CSS" and "Social Drinking," and definitely check the duo out live.

### 7. TRUE JUSTICE TRUE JUSTICE Hidden City/US/CD

The veteran Bay DJ mixes classic hip-hop beats with new street sounds on tracks like "Thizz Face" and "What You in It For" for a heavy solo release. Track it down online.

### 8. IN FLAGRANTI "ADDITIONAL ALPHA BLOCKER" Speak/US/12

Plugging along with the Codek boys and the mutant disco-funk that they're renowned for. Two sides of good here, for Son of Sound's new Speak Recordings out of NYC.

### 9. ANIMAL FARM "UNTITLED" demo/US/MP3

Portland shines yet again, with GenErik on soulful, retro-sounding production and a crew of MCs, including a guest spot from KRS ONE. Lovely!

### 10. PREFUSE 73 "CLASS OF 73 BELLS" Warp/UK/12

Nice, drumalicious prog-hip hop that can actually work on a dance-floor.

### 11. KING & HOUND "BURNIN' UP" Golden Goose/US/12

Further hotness from Garth and James Glass—a pumping Italo-disco beat and plenty of lovely house keys.

### 12. DAEDELUS FAIR WEATHER FRIENDS Ninja Tune/UK/EP

Speaking of dancefloors, the normally pleasingly off-kilter Daedelus offers up possibly his most club-friendly release yet. It's still proudly weird, of course, but a fun sound for this innovative producer.

### LUCKY 13) KLUNKERZ US/DVD

This fascinating film from Billy Savage documents the birth of mountain biking on Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County in the '70s, with tons of archival footage mixed with current interviews of seminal figures and the step-by-step technical innovations that led to the sport's massive worldwide growth.

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## IN THE STUDIO: COMMIX

BRITISH BASS HEADS TALK SIMPLE APPROACHES AND DUBSTEP'S EFFECT ON D&B.

WORDS: BRANDON IVERS PHOTO: SARAH GINN

Extreme technical prowess and drum & bass usually go hand-in-hand, but Commix isn't too bothered with any of that. Comprised of old friends George Levings and Guy Brewer, the Cambridge, U.K.-based duo has a laid-back production style that focuses on old-school basics: creative sampling and good ideas. It's an approach that seems almost too intuitive given their scene, but it allows them to avoid many of the clichés that have hounded drum & bass since pirated plug-ins became the norm.

On Commix's new album, *Call to Mind*, standouts like "Be True" are seemingly effortless, borrowing from the immediacy of minimal techno and Philly soul without sounding like a creative stretch. Released on Goldie's legendary Metalheadz imprint, the album is a perfect example of the label's classically timeless vibe—the tracks are less like tracks and more like songs. We talked with self-described "non-tech-y record collector" Guy Brewer to see how they achieved that effect.

### XR8R: IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, PRODUCTION-WISE, TO EXTEND A TUNE'S SHELF LIFE?

Guy Brewer: Maybe not on a strictly [technical] level—it's more about making sure the idea of the track is what comes through most. There's a lot of music out there that, to me, seems like an exercise in engineering. Like a tune where you've got this bass sound that's going to do this or that, and it's all you're focusing on—I think those tunes have less of a shelf life. The simple tunes, the ones put together in a few hours with a sort of vibe around them... those seem to stand the test of time.

### HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO FINISH TRACKS IN JUST A FEW HOURS?

Yeah! Most our songs are usually rolled out in three or four hours. We work mostly during the day, so we turn up to the studio around noon and work until eight or nine in the evening. We'll start on a few ideas, then take the best ones and tidy them up the next day. Most of the things that make the grade come out fluidly like that. If we spend any longer, we end up ruining stuff. Like, there have been times where we'd set out an entire arrangement and realized it was shit. So we take all the same sounds and make something totally different.

### DO YOU USUALLY WORK WITH SAMPLES OR SYNTHESIZED MATERIAL?

We sample all the time: pad sounds, bass sounds, everything. Not from drum & bass, obviously, but pretty much everywhere else. If we hear a little bleep or a kick drum off a techno record, we have no qualms with taking it. Pretty much all our sounds are sampled like that—even things like drum-machine sounds. If you sample a drum machine off an old Miami bass record, it's gonna sound much better than a drum machine in [Propellerheads] Reason or a plug-in. It's got that engineered, old-school analog sound to it, something we're very keen on.

### IS REASON YOUR SEQUENCER OF CHOICE?

We use Reason for all our arrangements, sequencing, and general production. Pretty much everything is sampled or processed before we put it in there. The only time we use something like Cubase is when we've got a big vocal or a solo musical part where it's too much hassle to chop it up. It's easier to [work with] it as audio. We also use Cubase when we've got a new plug-in synth—most of the time, we'll make some noises with the synth or whatever, and export the audio into Reason and treat it like another sample. It's a real seamless way for us to work. We like to do stuff like put a tune on the turntable, and just cut out all the bass and play stuff in Reason over top of it. We've ended up with a lot of great little accidents like that.

### HAS DUBSTEP AND GRIME AFFECTED THE WAY DRUM & BASS IS PRODUCED?

We named the album *Call to Mind* as a sort of nod... as in, we have to look back to [drum & bass] to remind us of what made it so interesting in the first place—the age of experimentation, doing other tempos on an album, having more of a story. It's like, you can make something musical and experimental that has an artistic edge to it, and it can still be playable on the dancefloor. You can see that with dubstep and grime. It's half the tempo and it's still packing clubs. There's a good vibe, and it's making people dance. And I think [drum & bass] is picking up on that.

Commix's *Call to Mind* is out now on Metalheadz.  
[www.myspace.com/commix](http://www.myspace.com/commix)



IN COMMIX'S STUDIO, PROPELLERHEADS' REASON, NATIVE INSTRUMENTS' ABSYNTH, AKAI MPC4000

## ARTIST TIPS: KIM HIORTHØY

A rare double threat, Kim Hiorthøy is as well known for his music as his graphic-design work. His visual art runs the gamut between zines, films, photography, and graphic design; particularly notable are his memorable record sleeves for Rune Grammofon. Hiorthøy's music, meanwhile, is a delicate strain of electro-pop that draws from folk and jazz, incorporating elements as disparate as field recordings and hip-hop beats. On *My Last Day* (Smalltown Supersound), his recently released second full-length, the Oslo, Norway-based producer stretches his sounds all over the map, deconstructing breakbeats with his MPC and rendering them organic and playful. Here, in his own words, is how he puts them altogether. *Joe Colly*

### BANG THE DRUMS

All of my tracks are basically made the same way. I've always just used an Akai MPC, which is a sampler/sequencer piece of hardware. I used to use the MPC2000, but about two years ago I started using the MPC4000, and also included a drum machine (Elektron's MachineDrum) and a small synth, a SidStation, both of which I'd begun using when I started to play live shows. The MPC2000 has 32 MB of memory, and you can assign only a limited number of samples at a time. I used to find that a bit limiting, but now working on the 4000, which has 500-something MB, [I realize] having so many options can be much worse. On the 2000, I had to be much stricter about what I wanted a track to be. On this bigger machine, with so many samples, tracks constantly mutate into other tracks in other styles, and it quickly becomes an incoherent mess.

### SAMPLE THE OFFERINGS

I usually begin by sampling a lot of stuff, mostly off of old records, but also from my own recordings of various instruments, or someone hitting a chair or something. And then from there it's just a process of mucking about. The hardest part is towards the end when you have to structure the track and decide what comes first and what comes after in a song. This always takes me a very long time. I like the residue that sounds come with when I sample them. I like to try and make music from as little as possible. I need less than I have now.

### CALL IT A DAY

A track is usually done when you decide it's done; you sort of hear it. I rarely decide beforehand what I'd like something to be, but I did have some ideas about some kind of hip-hop, or a memory of hip-hop, for this record. One of the tracks on the album, "Skuggan," is a waltz. The next-to-last track, "Hon var Otydlig, Som En Gas," has only a bass loop coming from the MPC and then the rest of it was played live in a room. I made a lot of tracks that didn't make it onto the album—and there still might be a couple on there that shouldn't have.

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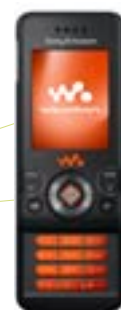
God knows we've been waiting a long time for an iPod DJ mixer with pitch control, and it seems that Cortex has finally answered the prayers of MP3Js worldwide. Adaptable with post-second-gen iPods of all types, and usable with any external or flash USB drive, the dMIX-300 is a pretty smooth, if a little bulky, piece of machinery. But unlike the last industry-wide round of iPod mixers, this one only requires one iPod: The dMIX indexes all of your external storage device's files and sends them to both sides of the crossfader, making beat-juggling from a single source a no-brainer. What's more, the backlit LCD displays are nicely organized according to your iPod's settings, making it a snap to find a track, artist, album, or genre with

a spin of the unit's jog wheels—you can even attach a separate keyboard for super-searching. Of course, all the basics are covered, too: 3-band EQ, selectable crossfader curve, cue-point management, aux ins, shuffle mode for autopiloting during a bathroom trip. It may not have a ton of bells and whistles (we'd love to be able to make loops from the cue points, and the jog wheel feels a little awkward), but for now the huge +/- 24% pitch control makes up for the little delays holding it back. Digital music-controller technology may still be in its infancy, but **the dMIX-300 is undoubtedly that corner of the gear world's biggest leap forward.** *Derek Grey*  
MSRP: \$599; [www.cortex-pro.com](http://www.cortex-pro.com)



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MSRP: \$999; [www.uaudio.com](http://www.uaudio.com)



## SONY ERICSSON W580I WALKMAN GSM PHONE

I'm definitely a flip-phone guy at heart, but Sony Ericsson's W580i Walkman phone has finally sold me on the slider. The W580i's sleek design and easy-to-navigate buttons drew me in, but its crazy-bright screen and well-considered functionality are what holds my attention—simple stuff like a quick-scrolling phonebook (which pulls up all entry info and not just the person's name) and super-intuitive predictive texting. Add to that an expandable memory slot for the music player (with a weird but kinda useful shuffle feature, activated by shaking the handset), photographs, and other multimedia, and you've got a pretty sweet package for a meager price. Hell, it's even got a step counter, which, admittedly, is hardly something I need on my phone, but **they don't call it the Walkman for nothin'.** *Ken Taylor*  
MSRP: \$79-129 depending on contract;  
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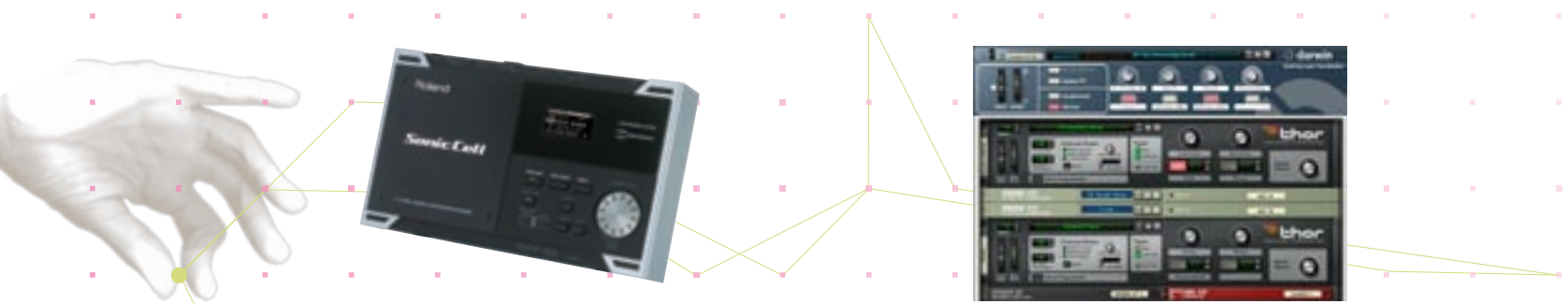
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Taking the legendary architecture and sound quality of their dedicated hardware synthesizers, Roland has developed a unique module with a built-in synth engine and audio interface. Containing a fresh set of wave-based samples, this bank includes everything from acoustic instruments to drums and world percussion. The Sonic Cell is expandable via the two SRX expansion boards on the back, allowing users to integrate several of the many famed aftermarket boards offered by Roland. New dimensions can be added to your sound, whether you drive Sonic Cell with a guitar, drum pad, or keyboard controller—simply plug and play. Extremely handy for the desktop musician, this unit can be connected to your PC and used as a standalone audio interface. Taking the load off your CPU, **the Sonic Cell allows you to focus your memory on your suite of plug-ins instead of on the mundane task of audio rendering.** *Praxis*  
MSRP: \$899; www.rolandus.com

**LAPJOCKEY FLATPACK 3 PLUG-INS**

Copped Reason 4 but can't be bothered to create all your sounds? Enter Lapjockey's Flatpack 3, which is something of **a godsend for those more interested in "careful selection and tweaking" than micro-programming.** The third iteration of the Flatpack retains the high bar of quality set by its predecessors, and has been designed specifically for Reason 4: a huge chunk of it is new Combinator patches (some of which, it should be noted, can get pretty heavy on older machines), most of which make use of Reason 4's new instruments. There are also ReDrum kits, REX loops, and synth modules galore—not to mention dozens of patches using Lapjockey's own original instruments. Some pretty complex CV routing also provides powerful control over the sounds. The weak dollar makes it pricy for those of us over here, but there's so much content it still seems worth it. *Evan Shamoon*  
MSRP: £50 (appr. \$100); www.lapjockey.com



**IK MULTIMEDIA SAMPLEMOOG VIRTUAL SYNTHESIZER**

With SampleMoog, IK Multimedia has taken on the intimidating responsibility of reproducing a cross-section of what is arguably the most kick-ass brand in synth history. The Taurus, the Prodigy, the Voyager, the Minimoog, the Multimoog, the Memorymoog, the Little Phatty... hell, even Bob Moog's original Etherwave Theremin is included in this comprehensive Moog multi-sample library. The more than 1,700 bass, lead, pad, and effect patches are powered by IK's proprietary SampleTank engine, which offers mono/poly/legato modes, two LFOs, two envelopes, sync-able LBF/BPF/HPF filters, and velocity, range, and macro controls. These are legendary sounds that every self-respecting electronic producer should be acquainted with. **Just try and price an analog original on eBay and you'll see why SampleMoog is something to get excited about.** *Roger Thomasson*  
MSRP: \$299; www.samplemoog.com



**LOGITECH PURE-FI ELITE HIGH-PERFORMANCE SPEAKERS FOR IPOD**

It seems like we can't go a day without the release of yet another iPod docking system, and with similar designs and sound, who can even tell them apart anymore? The latest offering from Logitech unfortunately doesn't stand out from the competition either, but that's not to say it isn't a worthy blaster. The Pure-Fi Elite features a built-in digital AM/FM tuner, a clean LCD display, dock adapters for iPods of all shapes and sizes, and a remote that not only controls basic stereo functions but all aspects of your iPod as well. The twin dome tweeters and "long-throw" woofers will certainly flood your apartment with ease, and the bass actually held up nicely when pressed with some four-to-the-floor boom, but when push comes to shove, a stereo of this size (with a price tag this large) is just **no replacement for a legitimate home component system.** *Ross Holland*  
MSRP: \$299.99, www.logitech.com

# SERIOUS CONTROL



**INTRODUCING THE FIRST KEYBOARD CONTROLLER WITH SOUL**

Sure, the MPK49 delivers a great 49-note semi-weighted keyboard with aftertouch, tons of assignable knobs and sliders and 12 drum pads. But what really sets it apart is what's under the hood. The core of the MPK49 includes an onboard arpeggiator combined with note repeat and swing parameters pulled straight from the iconic MPC family, giving it that unmistakable MPC feel.

Whether you're performing live, MIDI sequencing or creating beats, the MPK49 gives you all the control you'll ever need. And then some.

## WHO GOT GAME

2007 is at an end and we, for one, are exhausted. Here is a rundown of just some of the year's major gaming brouhahas and ballyhoos.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL

### MOST HYPED

**Halo 3 (Microsoft; Xbox 360)**

In theory, the hype for *Halo 3* began in 2004 the moment *Halo 2* ended, making people ask "WTF just happened?" Fast-forward to September 2007 and *Halo 3* mania could not be escaped. Launch parties with Lil Jon. *Halo 3* Ferris wheels. Even Mountain Dew was slathered in *Halo*-y goodness. Pray that Microsoft has not figured out how to zap shit directly into your mind for *Halo 4*—because they'll do it.

www.halo3.com

### BEST MUSIC

**Mass Effect (Microsoft; Xbox 360)**

When most people think about what makes a game truly memorable, giant explosions or bouncing boobs are usually at the top of the list. But music is one of the first things we notice (obvs) and no other game music this year made as big an impression as that of *Mass Effect*. Imagine if Tangerine Dream and John Carpenter made moody, synth-savvy babies and you'll know why this space thriller had us hooked immediately.

www.masseffect.com

### MOST WELCOME SURPRISE

**BioShock (2K Games; Xbox 360)**

Let's face it: Little girls with pigtails are fucking creepy. 2K Boston (a.k.a. Irrational Games) figured this out and made one of the most innovative, gorgeous, and all-around memorable first-person console games ever in *BioShock*. An underwater, Art-Deco world filled with mutant children, insane powers (fire, ice, and bees all shoot from your fingers), and the disembodied voice of Bing Crosby all made *BioShock* something a great deal more special than the average shooter.

www.2kgames.com/bioshock

### BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

**No Grand Theft Auto 4 in 2007 (Rockstar; Xbox 360, PS3)**

Love it or hate it, *Grand Theft Auto* is one of the biggest series on earth and last year the world was put on notice that *Grand Theft Auto 4* would be bringing its brand of cultural satire and grade-A violence to gamers in October of 2007. But in August, Rockstar announced that *GTA 4* simply would not be ready for its October release date due to "development challenges" and was pushed back to early 2008. Lame.

www.gta4.com

### BEST MUSIC—HONORABLE MENTION

**Rock Band (EA; Xbox 360, PS3, Wii)**

While the basic guitar/bass set-up remains the same as *Guitar Hero*, *Rock Band* introduced drums and karaoke vocals into the mix for a true "band" experience. And with killer tunes from the likes of Faith No More and Rush, *Rock Band* is perhaps the ultimate party game for the drunk and talent-less.

www.rockband.com

### MESSIEST LAUNCH

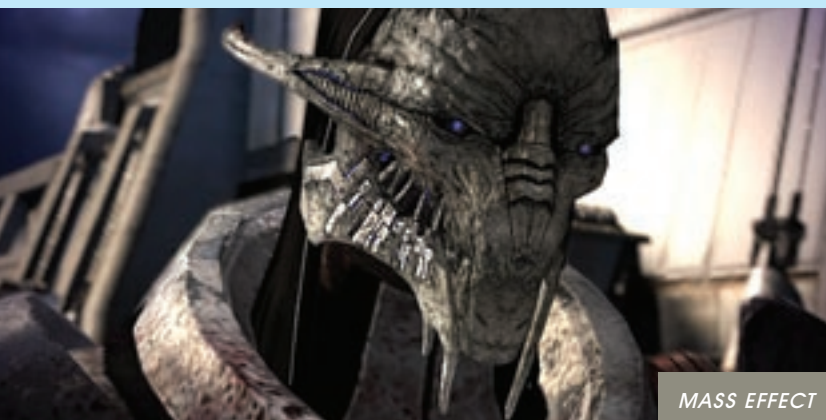
**Manhunt 2 (Rockstar; PS2, PSP, Wii)**

Rockstar could not catch a break in 2007. Originally slated for summer 2007, *Manhunt 2* was set to turn up the horror and violence of the original, which saw you as a death-row convict forced to murder your way to freedom. The Wii version would use the system's motion controls to simulate the murderous motions of execution sequences, which the morally upright naturally saw as "teaching murder." Then the ESRB—the games rating board—slapped *Manhunt 2* with an Adults Only rating: The kiss of death for games at family-friendly retail giants. After some editing, *Manhunt 2* received the intended M rating in the U.S. and was scheduled for a Halloween release. The game is still banned altogether in the U.K.

www.manhunt2.com

### OUR TOP 10 OF '07

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>BioShock</i> (Xbox 360)                         | 6. <i>Mass Effect</i> (Xbox 360)            |
| 2. <i>Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles</i> (PSP) | 7. <i>Metroid Prime 3: Corruption</i> (Wii) |
| 3. <i>God of War 2</i> (PS2)                          | 8. <i>Orange Box</i> (Xbox 360, PS3)        |
| 4. <i>Halo 3</i> (Xbox 360)                           | 9. <i>Rock Band</i> (Xbox 360, PS3, Wii)    |
| 5. <i>The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass</i> (DS) | 10. <i>Super Mario Galaxy</i> (Wii)         |



MASS EFFECT



BIOSHOCK

## SEASON-ENDING SHOCKAH

We chat with Ken Levine, Creative Director of 2K Boston and the mind behind one of 2007's greatest successes, *BioShock*.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL

### XLR8R: How and when was *BioShock* born?

Ken Levine: I'd say we've been thinking about it since around 2000, but the ball really got rolling in 2004. It went through a lot of iterations, but we really settled into the *BioShock* we know now in late 2005.

### Did you think *BioShock* would become as huge as it was?

I think the team and I were pretty surprised. I've done this long enough to know that it's almost impossible to tell if other people will love the thing you love. I've made enough games that didn't do well that I stopped trying to guess. We never set out to make a game that doesn't sell well; we set out to make exactly the game we wanted to make and we're thrilled that people seem to dig it.

### Did anything specific influence you for *BioShock*?

It was a day that my wife and I spent at Rockefeller Center in New York that sealed the deal on the visuals of the game. I had been there a thousand times but it never occurred to me that it would work visually in a game before. As far as

other influences, *The Shining* is the novel that taught me what scary was. Also, certainly *Fight Club*, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, and *Logan's Run* for movies. And of course, riding over it all was [Ayn] Rand's *The Fountainhead*.

### What are your personal gaming habits? Any favorites?

I play a bit of everything—*Jeanne D'Arc* on the PSP, *Halo 3*, and I finished most of the new *Zelda* on DS, too. I'm looking forward to *Hellgate* and I think I'll never stop playing *Civilization* as they keep making them.

### The music in *BioShock* contributed largely to the game's mood. Do you think that the role of music in games has reached a level it deserves?

I wasn't a fan of music in games until *BioShock*. I never wanted music in our games, I thought it got in the way. It wasn't until Emily Ridgway showed me what she and composer Garry Schyman could do with his beautiful score that I believed in it. Now I can't imagine *BioShock* without it. Selecting the licensed score to *BioShock* was

also a great joy for me. I got to connect with my dad, who pointed me in the right direction. And I got to know artists like Django Reinhardt and Bing Crosby. (Moby and Oscar the Punk also remixed several tracks for a *BioShock* EP—Ed)

### Are you pleased with the state of gaming?

I'm pretty happy with the state of things. Downloadable content really rounded out games for me. I was worried niche products would disappear, but the internet lowered the barrier of entry. The handhelds are now powerful [enough] to support real gaming, so there's always an option no matter where you are.

### We'd say you've had a hell of a year. How do you feel about it now that *BioShock* is out?

I'm glad it's over, but I really miss working on it. The experience of building the game with the team was without a doubt the highlight of my career.

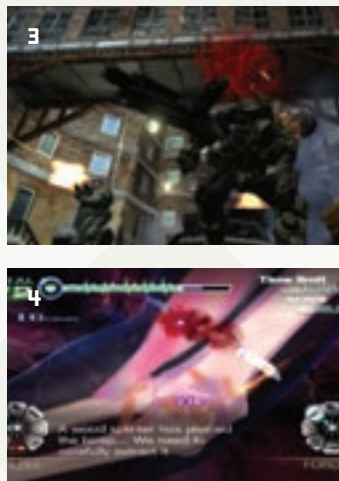
www.2kgames.com/bioshock



# loading...

XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.

WORDS: RYAN RAYHILL



December is a slim month for game releases but since we've been nice this year, we hope Santa drops one of these choice gems in our stocking! Better than the reindeer poo you got last year...

Kind of like *General Hospital* with a dash of *X-Files*, **Trauma Center: New Blood** (Atlus; Wii) is the latest in the surgical series for the Wii that follows the hotshot doctor duo of Marcus Vaughn and Valerie Blaylock as they literally slice and dice their way through vast conspiracies within the Alaskan medical system, which is apparently a lot seedier than you would imagine.

Along with turning invisible, mastery over the forces of time was one of the best powers we could have imagined when we were in high school. Despite our totally-in-no-way-creepy intentions with such powers, we never got them. But at least this holiday season brings us **TimeShift** (Sierra; Xbox 360, PS3), where you play a time-altering badass sent to the past to chase another, *evil-er* time-altering badass that's taken over the country.

Released in the arcades of Japan a couple of years ago, **Ghost Squad** (Sega; Wii) is a light gun-style game in the vein of classics like *House of the Dead* or *Virtual Cop* that sees you taking out freedom-hating terrorists (some of whom happen to ironically be bikini-loving, as it turns out) with 25 different weapons. You can either play solo, *Die-Hard*-style, or with up to four players, *A-Team*-style.


If methodical, critical thinking is more your speed, then perhaps the crime-solving antics of **CSI: Hard Evidence** (Ubisoft; Xbox 360, Wii) are for you. Join various members of the show's Vegas investigation team as they look into five different cases, including such scenarios as the mystery of the dead rock band or the instance of the murdered eye doctor,

with the only witness being...his blind wife! *Twilight Zone* shit, son.

Are you ready to get *extreme*? Prepare to do the Dew and snap into a Slim Jim because here comes **MX vs. ATV: Untamed** (THQ; all systems). Take motocross bikes, four-wheel ATVs, and even trucks from stadiums into the wild as you jump, trick, and tear up the earth in every possible way vulcanized rubber can.

Whoever coined the phrase "hugs not drugs" has obviously never been involved in a futuristic firefight as seen in **Haze** (Ubisoft; PS3). In the year 2048, there is no more government-run military, only military corporations, of which you just happen to be a part and from whom you also just happen to receive the "enhancement" drug known as "Nectar." However, after a while of offing rebel guerillas while juiced on Nectar you begin to realize that all is not as it seems—like, your dog is totally not Jesus, *man*.

Grade-A gearsmith Pelican brings us two new peripherals that are designed to make your life that much easier/fun. First up is the **Wii Sports Pack** designed by Nerf; these attachments—resembling a tennis racket, baseball bat, and golf club—are a non-lethal way to swing your Wii remote and still feel like you are kinda doing a real sport indoors. Pelican's other offering, the **PlayStation 3 Charge Station**, allows you to charge up the lithium-ion batteries of the PS3's SIXAXIS controllers in a more fashionable and practical manner than the current method of a tacky USB cord that only works when the PS3 is on but when you aren't playing games on it. (Which I can't say many of us do. Sorry Sony!)

 Catch the weekly Loading column at [www.xlr8r.com/news](http://www.xlr8r.com/news)

1. PELICAN WII SPORTS PACK
2. HAZE
3. TIMESHIFT
4. TRAUMA CENTER: NEW BLOOD
5. GHOST SQUAD

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# VIS-ED: MATT FURIE

FUR, FANGS, AND FANTASY REIGN IN ONE THRIFT-STORE EMPLOYEE'S FAR-OUT WORLD.

WORDS VIVIAN HOST  
IMAGES MATT FURIE

Matt Furie's mind must be a crazy place. It's populated with bats wearing polo shirts and riding BMX bikes, French-kissing birds with boobs, and weeping daisies. Also present are ALF and Falkor (the dragon from *The Neverending Story*), Freddy Krueger cradling a child, and a guy with a hamburger for a head.

You might wish you had such interesting things tripping trails through your cerebral cortex, so luckily there's Furie's art, where an assortment of brightly colored friends, foes, and furry things share bizarre, often tender moments with each other. Though his work may seem like nothing more than an ironic monster mash, there is a startling humanity to these colored-pencil-and-ink drawings that makes you want to look at them again and again. Plus Furie's got a real talent for drawing hair and an ability to tug at nostalgic heartstrings; with their gummy lips, cool sunglasses, and fondness for breakdancing and bad graffiti, his funny-faced dudes are definitely designed to amuse children of the '80s.

Since exporting himself to San Francisco from his native Ohio six years ago, Furie's work is slowly catching on. Following a variety of shows around the Bay Area—at Needles & Pens, Adobe Bookshop, and Low Gallery—and some promo from local art website Fecal Face, he is moving southward and eastbound with shows at The Cartoon Network offices and New Image Art in L.A., Giant Robot in NYC, and in Venice and London.

Furie, whose name is a bastardization of *fiore* (Italian for flower), isn't one for long musings, but we stalked him on the internet and found out that he's a fan of house pets (especially cats), Richard Scarry, *Mindfreak*,

and Aphex Twin. Then we had to know more, so we emailed him to get the lowdown on the sex lives of Rubix cubes and why *Muppets* rule over *Snorks* any day.

#### What was your favorite childhood game?

I used to ride my bike around and pretend I was Wolverine. My handlebars had different imaginary buttons that did different things, like shoot passersby.

#### What effect do you think growing up in Ohio has had on your work?

My mom was very supportive of my creative tendencies and she sent me to weekend drawing classes and paid for guitar lessons and stuff like that. I went to good public schools that offered lots of art classes, both during and after school, so it was a rich and imaginative place for me as a kid.

#### What scares you the most?

The overproduction of plastics, urban sprawl, and deforestation.

#### You seem to have recurring characters... Do you have names for them in your head and do you think of them as part of a continuing storyline?

The Rubix cube person, Cuboid, is sometimes a boy and sometimes a sexually active girl. The Skeletor-esque dude (a.k.a. Kid Skelly) is sometimes a nerdy, skinny kid and other times a caring grandmother. Both of those characters are based on actual toys I brought home from my day job as toy-sorter at the Community Thrift store.



RIGHT  
*Amor*, Matt Furie exclusive  
for *XLRR* Vis-Ed, 2007



**Name one artist whose work you really admire.**

I really admire Will Sweeney from the U.K. He creates a huge world full of intricate architecture, vehicles, four-legged vegetarian-sandwich creatures, ogres, hotdog villains, dog-people, fruit-people, complex war machines, castles, owl police, magical bearded cats, perfectly shaped sunglasses, and so much more.

**What do you find really funny?**

Bodily functions like pooping, peeing, barfing, ejaculating, burping, and farting.

**What was your best moment of 2007?**

The quiet moment in between jumping off of a houseboat and landing in the lake.

**What was your worst moment of 2007?**

Any moment at the laundromat.

**What's the one cultural moment of 2007 that stands out in your mind?**

I read an article in a *National Geographic* that described how the albatross flies for thousands of miles to a feeding area it has been going to

forever and mistakes washed-up brightly colored junk, like bottle caps and lighters, for food.

**What is the best lesson you have learned in the last couple of years?**

Don't sweat the petty, pet the sweaty.

**What music do you listen to while you work?**

AFX, Brian Eno (ambient), Stone Temple Pilots (karaoke practice), Skinny Puppy (*Too Dark Park*), Ariel Pink, Holy Shit, Jonathan Richman, Kraftwerk.

**Did you draw a lot of different things before you do what you do now, or has it been similar all along?**

I used to draw people a lot more. There are *sooo* many interesting things to draw, there is no limit.

**When did you move to San Francisco?**

I moved here with my college roommate, Nasty Neff, in 2001, because it sounded like fun and I wanted to be like Robert Crumb. My work developed a lot out here because San Francisco is awesome and full of grown-up kids that like cartoon art.

**What is your favorite California slang?**

"Ghost riding the whip," which I think means to hang out of your car and dance while driving or maybe to get on top of the car and dance while it's driving. I also like the car modification in Oakland that made cars go "Woooooowoooo!" and was popularized by a YouTube clip of a really funny dude doing his impression of the noise.

**When was your last creative crisis and what was it about?**

I always feel like I spend too much time in my room.

**OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

*Rubix On Top*

*Frog Birdrider*

*Kid Shelly*

*Bat & Son*

**THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

*Full Cry*

*Panic Attack*

*Falcore Escapada*





**What's one thing you got rid of that you wish you still owned?**  
 My card collections that included Super Deformed mini-stickers from Japan and hecka Garbage Pail Kids.

**What is your favorite moment in '90s kitsch?**  
 That show *Dinosaurs* that had the baby that said, "Not the mama!"

**What is your favorite book?**  
*Animals: 1,419 Copyright-Free Illustrations of Mammals, Birds, Fish, Insects, etc., A Pictorial Archive From Nineteenth-Century Sources*, selected by Jim Harter.

**What do you do when you're feeling uninspired?**  
 Watch videos on YouTube. Then... Boom! Inspiration!

**Tell us a funny story about working at the thrift store.**  
 People poop all over the place there, both inside and out.

**Do you collect anything?**  
 Plastic hamburgers, earrings, and M.U.S.C.L.E.s.

**Horror movies, action figures, or comic books?**  
 Action figures. It's what we used to do before they developed all those damn videogames.

**Muppets, sock puppets, or Snorks?**  
*Muppets*: Big Bird, a guy in a garbage can, a woolly mammoth, Animal, Miss Piggy, Grover, Kermit. Need I say more?

[mattfurie.betternonsequitur.com](http://mattfurie.betternonsequitur.com)

See more of Matt Furie's artwork at [xlr8r.com/113extras](http://xlr8r.com/113extras).



TOP TO BOTTOM  
*Creature War*  
*Pop!* comic

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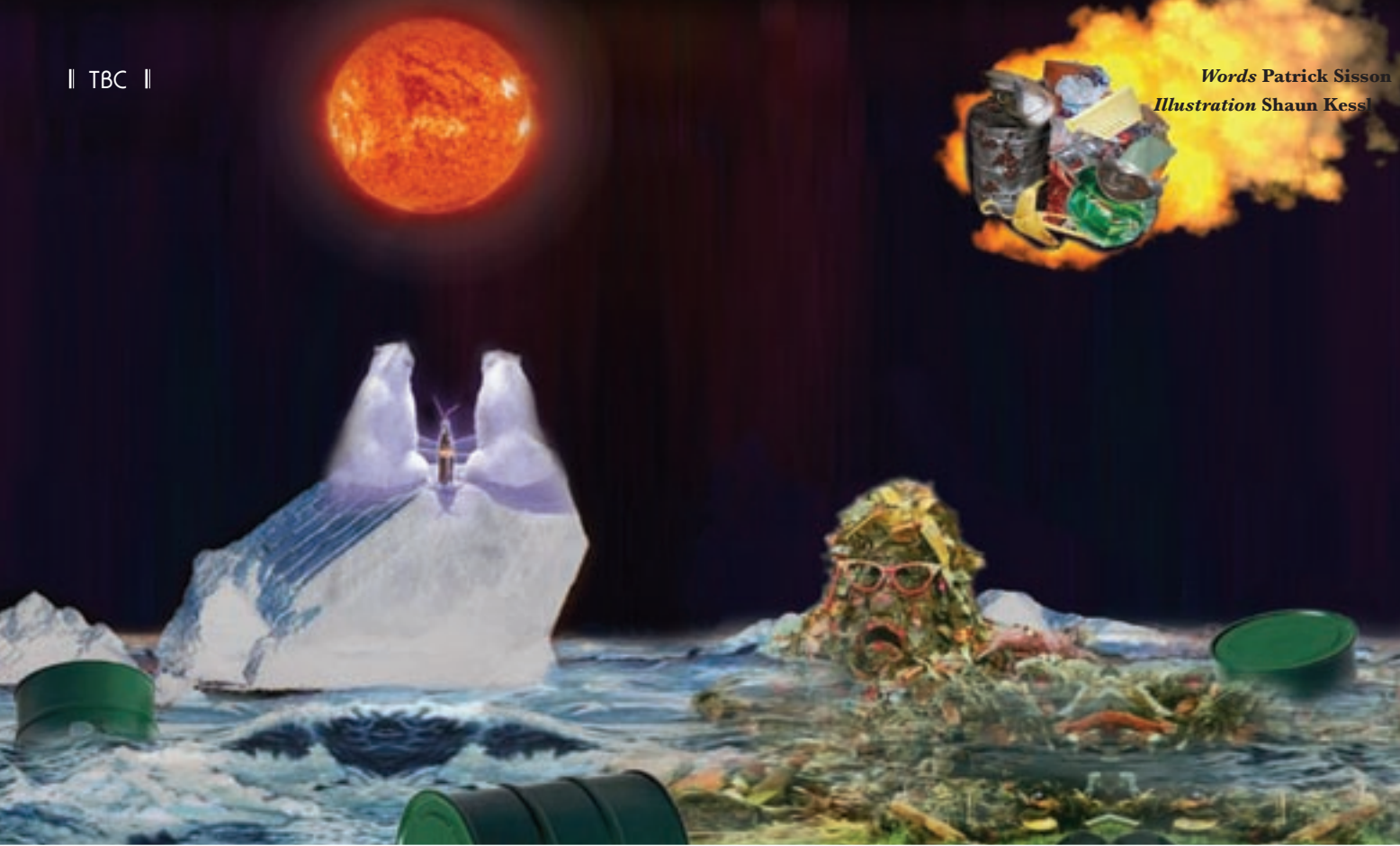
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Words Patrick Sisson  
Illustration Shaun Kessler

# GREENER PASTURES

DO THE DANCE-MUSIC WORLD'S ECO-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES GO FAR ENOUGH?

It wasn't long ago that global-warming "alarmist" Al Gore was mocked as "Owl" Gore or Ozone Man by his Republican opponents. It's a sign of how much popular culture has embraced the environmental issue that Gore, this year's Nobel Peace Prize recipient, is basking in adoration that would make Bono jealous, while our current President is derided for his anti-environmental stance. Responsibility for the environment is now part of economic and social debates, a trendy topic rather than a fringe concern. According to Brian Allenby, operations manager at Reverb, a company that helps musicians and labels adopt sustainable practices, a "paradigm shift" has occurred in recent years.

"It's not just early adopters who care," he says. "People are looking for answers. While people aren't going to change if it doesn't make financial sense, it's finally starting to point towards profit."

One of the dance-music community's first to take action is Richie Hawtin, whose Minus label recently announced its own green initiative that includes using sustainable packaging, pushing digital distribution, and buying carbon-offset credits for artist travel through the Berlin-based company Atmosfair.

Electronic music, with its history of repurposing technology and imagining utopian futures, is naturally at the vanguard of change. But can serious environmental concerns really be reconciled with the genre's hedonistic side—and the sizable carbon footprint left by jet-setting DJs and fans traveling great distances to attend festivals? Jet travel is the quickest-rising source of air pollution in the world, according to British environmental journalist George Monbiot. And, as Hawtin points out, the Rolling Stones are on the road for a few months, while DJs fly around the world year-round.

Even lauded environmentalists like producer Matthew Herbert, who has repeatedly addressed environmental issues and severely limits his own flights, sees the contradictions in his own lifestyle.

"If you wanted to pick my life apart in ethical terms," says Herbert, "you could have a field day. While making music with supposedly environmental messages, I use a massive vintage mixing board that requires several power supplies."

Herbert's intricately sourced music, filled with hidden connections and unknown causes, is itself a metaphor for the environmental quandary. Even seemingly benign actions have a consequence—pollution from my flight to Ibiza causes the global warming that may someday destroy the island's beaches—and something we enjoy, like his track, may have a sinister source.

"You start to unravel things and it all falls apart," he says. "That's the point that I want to make with my music. You tug on this loose thread, and it reveals itself."

But criticizing the first small steps for not being dramatic enough shouldn't diminish their importance, and the lack of a complete solution shouldn't overshadow positive changes. Allenby is often asked if "green" concerts ultimately promote an unsustainable practice. "The shows will happen anyways," he says. "We'd rather they be green and spread the right message."

As Hawtin notes, this is only the beginning. As more labels, artists, and booking agents commit to eco-conscious practices, the more cost-effective and practical solutions will become. Those first steps, and constant advocacy, should become catalysts for sober analysis and serious collaborative efforts to change.

"One of the most important jobs of musicians is to tell stories," says Herbert. "The war and climate change are the most amazing stories of our times, and the stories are being told by corporate media with agendas. I'm not sure why musicians [still] sing about the same [old] things."

[www.atmosfair.de](http://www.atmosfair.de), [www.m-nus.com](http://www.m-nus.com), [www.matthewherbert.com](http://www.matthewherbert.com)

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